

TWO WOMEN AND A WAR ■ LUKACS: THE NEW NATIONALISM

AUGUST 29, 2005

The American Conservative

HOW THE RIGHT
GOT
BIGGER
&
DUMBER



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ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

America Now Dependent On Others For Its Standard of Living

America is now so wholly dependent on foreign countries to finance its government, its consumption, and its production that we are becoming utterly helpless against the cohesive planned economic attack being waged by these other countries. The result is the buying out of our critical industries and resources and the crippling and collapse of many of our remaining American owned industries.

Total Foreign Control

99% of the US Federal Deficit was purchased by foreign investors in 2004 (Fed Reserve, June 2005) who are on pace to take control of over \$700 Billion of US assets in 2005 alone (current pace of US trade deficit with rest of the world through first 5 months of 2005). On average, the IRS calculates that \$1 in \$4 spent in America on manufactured goods goes immediately to imports. Certain key chokepoint industries in this country are now almost totally controlled by foreign countries (**Cement Industry 81% - Movie Industry 70% - TV Industry 100%**) and our auto industry is now relentlessly sliding into foreign hands.

Buying Us Out With Our Own Money

As former Assistant Treasury Secretary under President Reagan, Paul Craig Roberts writes, the "result of many years of persistent trade surpluses with the United States, the Japanese government holds dollar reserves of \$1 Trillion. China's accumulation of dollars is approximately \$600 Billion. South Korea holds about \$200 Billion."

These dollars are returning to this country to buy us out and to exert influence over our ability to control our future.

Recent Chinese bid for American Unocal is a prime example. They are demanding that we accept the US dollars China has earned selling us Christmas lights, toys, and clothing in exchange for our oil and other critical industries.

Senators have called for an immediate review of the proposed purchase of the US oil producer Unocal by the Chinese company CNOOC. The review board that would determine if there is a national security risk is the Committee on Foreign Investments in the U.S. or CFIUS. This is part of the US Treasury - the same US Treasury that depends on China to buy its bonds!

Treasury Secretary John Snow has denounced every move proposed to curb our dependence on foreign debt or foreign goods. He is acceding to the wishes of our foreign money lenders, otherwise they could cut off our loans and we would have a difficult time operating our government or giving tax refunds. As our debts escalate we are forced to sell off our resources to pay the debt.

If this continues, yearly increasing debt, internally and externally, living on imports, and selling our major companies to foreign ownership - America will inexorably recede from Super Power into Colonial or 3rd World Status.

Write your Congressperson with your thoughts on these issues

Learn more at www.EconomyInCrisis.org.

How Did This Happen?

Foreign Subsidies & Cheap Labor - Other countries use cheap labor, subsidized loan programs, and advanced technology to make and sell us goods cheaper than we can make here in America.

Free Trade & Selling Below Cost - Free trade policies allow these countries collectively to target specific industries here in America and sell below cost. US manufacturers may object but US consumers extol the ability to buy cheap foreign imports and temporarily improve their short term individual standard of living.

Bankrupt US Manufacturers - Facing subsidized foreign competitors who themselves are protected in their home markets, US manufacturers go bankrupt or are forced to outsource to survive (e.g. Boeing's new 7E7 is 52% designed and manufactured by Japan, Italy, and other countries; General Motors routinely uses Honda engines in several lines).

US Industrial Collapse - US loses its manufacturing base through bankruptcies or acquisitions and increases the dependence on foreign producers. (Foreign acquisitions of \$1.3 Trillion of US industries in the past decade)

Dependency - Foreign countries use American dollars earned from selling us foreign consumer goods then corner US Treasuries and buy us out. (99% of the US Federal Deficit was purchased by Foreign Investors in 2004)

No Bargaining Power - American government becomes so dependent on foreign Treasury buyers that it cannot object when foreign countries seek to buy out our core companies.

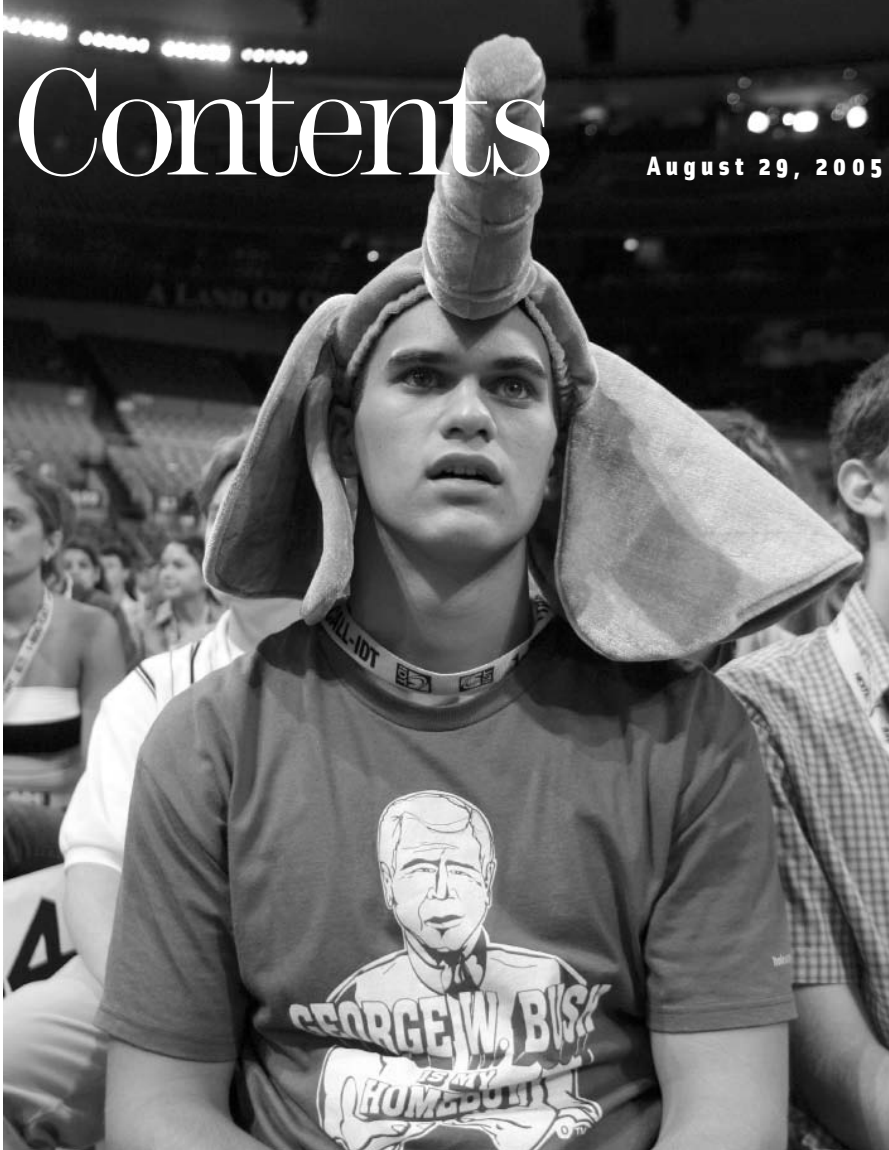
No Short Term Pain - American consumers feel no ill effects in the short-term because foreign purchases of US Treasury bonds keeps interest rates low and the money supply high.

Dim Future - Meanwhile, very low savings, high borrowing and debt, and the hollowing out of American industry is leaving us with a very dim future.

ECONOMY IN CRISIS
CREATING AWARENESS OF OUR TRUE ECONOMIC CONDITION

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End of summer issue

In keeping with our production schedule, TAC's next issue will publish in four weeks instead of the usual two. Have a wonderful summer!

[JUSTICE]

ROBERTS v. ROE?

President Bush's choice of John Roberts for the Supreme Court is an improvement over Sandra Day O'Connor. How much of an improvement remains unclear. As deputy solicitor general in the first Bush administration, Roberts wrote that *Roe v. Wade* was "wrongly decided and should be overruled." But during his confirmation hearings for his appellate judgeship, Roberts assured senators that *Roe* was the "settled law of the land" and that there was nothing in his "personal views that would prevent me... from applying that precedent." Such a statement isn't necessarily an indication of how he would vote on the Supreme Court, but it does make him a much bigger question mark than the NARAL hysterics would have us believe.

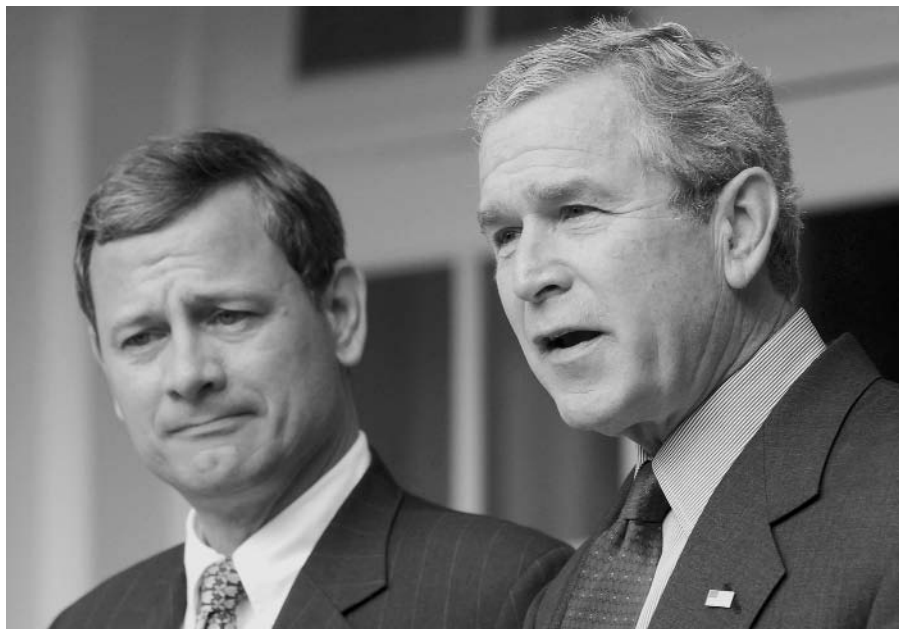
Bush deserves credit for resisting the temptation to put diversity above other considerations. Many would have had him reserve the seat for a woman; others hoped he would reward Hispanic voters with a dubious appointment for Alberto Gonzales.

He should show similar fortitude in advancing his nominee. The defeat of a conservative invariably brings about a consensus candidate who will push the court left. Think Anthony Kennedy—and Harry Blackmun. John Roberts is no David Souter. But the jury is still out on whether he is truly in the mold of Clarence Thomas or Antonin Scalia.

[POLITICS]

CODE WHITE

Groveling before the NAACP's annual convention, RNC Chairman Ken Mehlman did something unusual for a party panjandrum—he apologized for winning. Mehlman repudiated the "Southern Strategy" that has been the non-secret of Republican success for the last 30-odd years: "Some Republicans gave up on winning the African American vote, look-



AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

ing the other way or trying to benefit politically from racial polarization. I am here today as the Republican chairman to tell you we were wrong."

Slick. "Some Republicans" were guilty of this heinous crime, but rather than identify them and dissociate from these rascals, Mehlman says "we" were wrong. As for "giving up" on the black vote, any politician with a chance to win knows he has to hunt where the ducks are—not go courting the other party's base. Bob Herbert, the tough liberal columnist for the *New York Times*, got to the real point: "Mehlman's apology was less about starting a stampede of blacks into the G.O.P. than about softening the party's image in the eyes of moderate white voters." As our own Steve Sailer joked, if Mehlman's views were meant seriously, "surely as a direct logical consequence of this realization that the ... Southern Strategy was wrong, all white Southern GOP members of both Houses of Congress would resign tomorrow, along with the President..." But it isn't so—apologies are just the new "code words," telling white liberals that it's OK to vote GOP.

[CULTURE]

BABY TALK

It was an unlikely headline for a Reuters environmental-impact story: "Unborn babies carry pollutants, study finds." Even more surprising was the call from some quarters to protect these unborn babies by legislation. "If we ever had

proof that our nation's pollution laws aren't working, it's reading the list of industrial chemicals in the bodies of babies who have not yet lived outside the womb," argued Rep. Louise Slaughter (D-N.Y.).

"Babies," said Ms. Slaughter, who has a 100 percent rating from Planned Parenthood and serves as co-chair of the Congressional Pro-Choice Caucus. What an interesting choice of words. In other contexts, such phrasing might be dismissed as extremism, but one supposes a little "extremism" in defense of green causes is no vice—and consistency is no virtue.

[MIDEAST]

AMERICAN-MADE AXIS

So the flower-throwing scene didn't work out, Chalabi proved a dim star, the weapons weren't, and that democratic springtime across the Mideast is a bit slow to sprout. But at least our Iraqi charge can be counted on to fill its old role as a regional balance against Iran? Not exactly.

The new Iraqi defense minister has just taken a trip to Tehran, where he struck a deal with the mullahs. (Seems that the "enemy of my enemy is my friend" proverb translates into Arabic.) Under the terms of the agreement, Iran will begin to train Iraq's fledgling defense forces.

Blogger Robert Dreyfuss took a tour of the usual war-boasting websites and found no comment: "The United States

is supporting a regime in Baghdad that is drawing strength from a regime next door in Iran that calls America the Great Satan. The silence from the neoconservatives on this paradox is deafening."

Deafening, indeed, but we'll take it. Silence beats their usual "bombs away!"

[MILITARY]

TAKE THAT VILLAGE

What's a Hillary-hater to do? Standing between former heads of West Point and the Army War College, the would-be Iron Lady unveiled legislation to add 100,000 new soldiers to the Army—a \$12 billion project. Her most practiced critics no doubt found themselves in a quandary: invading the world works better with a few extra bodies, but how can a Republican hawk line up behind the Left's best hope?

Don't spend much sympathy on their cognitive dissonance. More pity belongs to the Armed Forces. The ironically titled Army Relief Act has nothing to do with shrinking their commitments to accord with the national interest. Rather, it increases the likelihood that American troops will continue to be scattered round the globe in any number of quixotic crusades.

[NEOCONS]

BOLTON BRANCHES OUT

For any breathing a relieved sigh that the neocons have scattered—Paul Wolfowitz to the World Bank, Doug Feith into overdue retirement, George Tenet checking his reflection in his Presidential Medal of Freedom—not so fast.

Just when it looked as if John Bolton might be safely out of town, off to visit his considerable abilities on the UN, he's enlarging his Washington estate. While caught in confirmation purgatory—after two votes to sustain filibusters against him, he has been eclipsed by the Roberts nomination—Bolton's passing the time by doing some redecorating at Foggy

Bottom. According to the *Washington Post*, "Two months ago, while his confirmation was in trouble, Bolton began efforts to double the office space reserved within the State Department for the ambassador to the United Nations."

It's not about feng shui but influence: "Bolton told several colleagues he needs more space and a larger staff in Washington because, if confirmed, he intends to spend more time here than his predecessors did," the *Post* continues. "Bolton isn't going to sit in New York while policy gets made in Washington," [an] administration source said."

So for those hopeful that the neocon heights have been vacated—our readers in Tehran, for instance—guess again. The usual suspects are doubling their office suites and most likely their efforts.

[IMMIGRATION]

PASSING NOTES TO ALLEN

Conservatives fed up with Republican leadership that is AWOL on immigration reform are desperately seeking a presidential candidate to hoist their banner.

Congressman Tom Tancredo (R-Colo.) has been on the hustings in Iowa trying to keep our borders in the debate. Tancredo backers hope that Republican immigration frustration will produce a big enough groundswell to convince him to run or persuade one of the more established candidates to take up the issue. One possibility mentioned in a *Rocky Mountain News* story on Tancredo's Iowa visit was Sen. George Allen (R-Va.).

Perhaps someone may begin whispering in Allen's ear. A subsequent *Rocky Mountain News* piece quotes a former Colorado resident offering Tancredo some praise for keeping immigration in the spotlight: "You cannot take away from him that he is willing to weather criticism from various entities by talking about this issue the way he does." The comment was attributed to Dick Wadhams, chief of staff to Senator Allen. ■

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Philosophical Roots of the Iraq War

Why are we in Iraq? Who took us in is no secret. But what caused Bush, Cheney, and Rumsfeld to believe it would be a “cakewalk,” that U.S. troops would be

welcomed as “liberators,” that democracy would take root and spread to Iran, Syria, and across the Middle East?

How could tough-minded nationalists have believed this? Where did their serene confidence come from?

The intellectual and political roots of the Iraq War and the Bush crusade for democracy is the subject of *Sands of Empire: Missionary Zeal, American Foreign Policy, and the Hazards of Global Ambition*. Journalist Robert Merry traces the history of the great ideas that have motivated U.S. foreign-policy elites. High among them is the Idea of Progress: the belief that mankind is ever moving upward, the West is the greatest of all civilizations, America is its supreme expression, our values are universal values, and to convert the world to them is America’s divine mission.

With America’s Cold War victory in 1989, believers in this idea were convinced that democracy and free-market capitalism had won the war for the world and were the future for all nations. We have reached, wrote Francis Fukuyama, “The End of History.”

The rival idea is that culture spawns civilizations, that cultures are in conflict, that civilizations rise and fall. By this cyclical theory of history, the belief that America’s way will be the world’s way is both arrogant and utopian. Other civilizations will resist us as Islam has for 1,400 years. Prof. Samuel Huntington’s “Clash of Civilizations” is grounded in this view of history.

After 9/11, Merry argues, a “callow president without any discernible sense of ... history or culture,” plunged America into war in the heart of the Islamic world because he had been converted to this Wilsonian Idea of Progress and embraced Theodore Roosevelt’s Will to Power. Storming Iraq to rid it of a dictator and create a new democracy was the logical result of these twin beliefs. But if George W. Bush came into office with views closer to those of Robert Taft than Wilson and the war-loving TR, where did he get these ideas? For it was not in Crawford, Texas. A primary source, says Merry, was the neoconservatives.

As Butch said to Sundance, “Who are those guys?” and what do they believe?

Reviewing the long march of these “nomadic intellectuals” from the Marxist Left to liberalism to the Right, Merry concludes there is really no fundamental neoconservative philosophy—and no fixed political positions neoconservatives hold. They are, rather, ideological vagabonds who “aren’t really conservatives at all.”

They have, however, common characteristics. “One is that they seem most happy directing sectarian hostility toward their ostensible allies while ignoring their ideological foes.”

As Trotskyites, they fought the Bolsheviks. As socialists, they fought other socialists. As liberal Democrats, they fought liberal Democrats. After moving to the Right, they were quickly at war with the Right. While they had supported LBJ, Humphrey, and McGovern, they were soon attacking Nixon and Reagan

for not being as hard-line anti-Soviet as they had themselves lately become.

Seeing the world in terms of good and evil, they rallied to the post-9/11 George W. Bush and called for a crusade for democracy, an idea they had ridiculed as utopian and ruinous in the Carter era. Where once Jeane Kirkpatrick argued the necessity to work with autocrats to win the Cold War, now pro-American autocrats in the Arab world headed up the neocons’ enemies list.

Writes Merry, “these restless intellectuals have a tendency to make their way to whatever watering hole they can find to quench their need for a rhetorical argument of the moment.”

Merry believes the Iraq War—planting an American army and flag in the heart of Islam—is a historic blunder by Bush that has advanced and exacerbated the war of civilizations. “Captivated by the Cold War mentality of his top advisers and intoxicated with the idea of spreading Western-style democracy throughout the lands of Arabia, Bush embraced a post 9/11 foreign policy destined from the beginning to lead his country toward calamity.”

Clinton and Albright did the same in the Balkans, Merry argues, which he considers a victory for radical Islam over a Christian West in the underbelly of Europe.

A majority of Americans now believes the Iraq War was a mistake and want to start bringing our troops home. But Democrats are wary of being branded “cut-and-run” and Republicans remain loyal to the president.

But the foreign-policy debate America did not have in 2004, because Bush went unchallenged in the primaries and Kerry played swiftboat hawk, is coming. Merry’s book will help guarantee it. ■

[where have you gone, Willmoore Kendall?]

Defining Conservatism Down

As the Right's popularity has grown, its intellectual challenge to the Left has diminished.

By Austin Bramwell

HAD CONSERVATISM a Cassandra, she might, amidst the current mood of triumph, point out that whereas 50 years ago the American Right boasted several political theorists destined to exert a lasting influence, today it has not one to its credit. In the 1950s and '60s, James Burnham, Richard Weaver, Leo Strauss, Harry Jaffa, Russell Kirk, Friedrich Hayek, and Willmoore Kendall (among others) were all at the apex of their powers. No figure of similar stature remains.

To be sure, this does not mean that conservatism has gone into intellectual decline. We may, on the contrary, be living through the high summer of conservative ideas in America. If in 1950 all the right-wing intellectuals in America could fit into a single living room, today they could fill Madison Square Garden; if in 1950 one could read their combined monthly output in a single sitting, today one could not possibly keep abreast of the voluminous popular and scholarly literature that they produce. From journalism, politics, and law to religion, economics, and international relations, self-identified right-wingers abound.

Nonetheless, while the American Right may not have been losing candlepower, it has been deploying it in different ways. A half century ago, Willmoore Kendall proclaimed that he would become the American Burke. He meant at least three things: first, that America had lacked a genius to trace for all time

the lineaments of an American conservative tradition; second, that an American conservative tradition nonetheless existed; and, third, and that he alone could midwife it into self-consciousness.

Nor was Kendall alone. Several of his coevals were contending to become the Father of American Conservatism. Russell Kirk made the cover of *Time* after *The Conservative Mind* rediscovered—some would say imagined—a Burkean sensibility in American politics. Others, imbued with Cold War foreboding, sought to define all that European civilization stood for in the hope of averting what they called the “crisis of the West.” In their warnings against liberalism and socialism, Richard Weaver, Whittaker Chambers, Leo Strauss, and Eric Voegelin assumed the prophetic office. “Put away thine abominations,” they warned, “lest the Lord’s fury come forth like fire.”

No similar figure exists today. At the end of his life, Kendall was writing a book that he hoped would demolish his rivals’ claims to have understood American conservatism. He need not have bothered; there is no “American Burke” from whom all conservative ideas in this country derive. Rather, the achievement of Kendall and his brethren was collective: together, they left behind a set of doctrines assumed to constitute the essence of American conservatism—limited government, anti-utopianism, free-market economics, patriotism, traditional moral-

ity and religion, federalism, anticommunism, and belief in “absolutes.”

Few today wish to reinterpret these doctrines, much less re-evaluate them. Though every year the conservative movement raises thousands of aspiring intellectuals, they have no interest in creating a new intellectual synthesis. If they go into academia or the think-tank world, they contribute to research projects long under way; if they go into journalism, they defend an established editorial line. In blogosphere parlance, they become “instapundits,” not philosophers.

Meanwhile, young conservatives—in contrast to the anticommunists of the 1950s and the neoconservatives of the 1970s—rarely come to right-wing ideas through any kind of epiphany. Rather, they inherit their conservatism from parents or grandparents. Through generously funded seminars and think-tank internships, they study the canon of conservative thought: *The Road to Serfdom*, *Ideas Have Consequences*, *Capitalism and Freedom*, *The Conservative Mind*, *Witness*, *Atlas Shrugged*, *In Defense of Freedom*, *The Closing of the American Mind*, and others. These works, almost all written in the 1940s, '50s, and '60s, define the ideology they are charged with advancing.

Meanwhile, though the conservative counter-establishment still occasionally raises hackles, liberals have become increasingly accustomed to it. In the

1990s, Hillary Clinton posited the existence of a “Vast Right-Wing Conspiracy,” an epithet become so hackneyed because it is not altogether inaccurate. Today, by contrast, leftists write thoughtful histories of the conservative movement 30 years after William Rusher and George Nash wrote theirs. Even Ronald Reagan has been apotheosized.

In recognition of this trend, the *New York Times* recently established a conservative beat whereby one reporter, rather than dismiss conservatives as malevolent extremists, tries to discover what they are actually thinking. Like all journalists, to make sense of the blooming, buzzing confusion of the world, he settles on what seems to him the most interesting theory: every disagreement among conservatives augurs the opening of ideological fissures. Hence, the *Times* regularly treats its readers to stories on conservative debates and suggests that we will see more of them in the future.

The conservative establishment invariably reacts with hoots of derision. Silly Gray Lady, didn't you know that we have always had debates among ourselves? Then they congratulate themselves for tolerating opposing points of view—unlike those rigid liberals at the *Times*.

Neither side bothers to observe that conservatives lost interest in internal debate 30 years ago, when the nature of American conservatism remained an open question. Since then, the possibility of a “crack-up” has grown more remote, not less. Fresh debates among right-wingers still occur, but rarely at the highest theoretical level. Gone are the days when Kendall could accuse Weaver of “ill-tempered name-calling” or Burnham could call Meyer “the perfect ideologue.” Meanwhile, like Ixion's wheel, the disputes of 40 years ago grind on.

Yet few worry that conservatism will go flabby. The tenets have already been settled, they think; all that is left is to promote them. Conservatives already

know what they believe and no longer need anyone to explain it for them. Others accomplished that great and arduous work a generation ago.

Given this philosophical complacency, one would think that Kirk, Hayek, and others (including eccentric outsiders such as R.J. Rushdoony, L. Brent Bozell, and Ayn Rand) had left behind a commanding legacy. One would expect that, like Burke, they had articulated ideas so powerful that they can only be contended with, not refuted. Americans have produced such ideas before: the pragmatism of C.S. Peirce and William James, for example, recurs so often in so many fields of inquiry as to constitute a permanent mode of thinking.

Has conservatism achieved this exalted stature? If we are honest, we must answer no.

In the 1950s and '60s, conservatives sought not just to refute modern liberalism but to obliterate it. Thus they charged that liberals were not merely wrong but were trying to “immanentize the eschaton”—an ancient heresy! (Voegelin) Or that they were in the grip of William of Occam—an insidious 13th-century Simon Magus! (Weaver) Or they were contemptible second-handers—sub-human weaklings! (Rand) And so on. Each conservative writer claimed to have uncovered the Holy Grail—the argument or principle that would expose the errors of liberalism (and communism, socialism, feminism, etc.) once and for all.

Since then, while American conservatives have retained their passion for Big Ideas, their passion for the biggest idea of all—the Holy Grail that will refute liberalism—has waned. Most simply assume that the Grail has already been found. Thus, they breezily dismiss liberals with some of their favorite epithets—“rationalists,” “relativists,” “statists,” “utopians,” or “historicists.” (Sometimes they could hardly be more inapt. A person

who regards government health care as a human right, for example, is not a “relativist” but an arch-moralist.) Never mind that liberals, nonplussed by the vituperative quality of right-wing thought, themselves reject these labels. Someone out there has already proved that one or another will stick.

Yet the Holy Grail has not been found. One can still find lapel-grabbing right-wingers who will argue late into the night that their favorite thinker has figured everything out for all time. (My personal favorite: certain libertarians believe that Alan Gewirth, a now forgotten philosopher of the 1970s, showed how the rightness of limited government derives ultimately from Aristotle's law of non-contradiction.) This is not the place to take up the argument with them. I only wish to observe, as an empirical matter, that no one person's ideas actually define American conservatism. If English conservatism is nothing other than Burkeanism, American conservatism is not Rothbardianism, Randianism, Jaffaism, or Hayekianism.

Indeed, the more a right-winger exalts one set of ideas, the more marginal he becomes; by contrast, the more foggy he remains about what the Holy Grail is, the more influence he can have. Thus, on the one extreme, the votaries of Ayn Rand refuse to talk to right-wingers who do not take Rand's works as gospel; somewhere in the middle, “Claremont conservatives” sometimes castigate those who do not share their enthusiasm for the Declaration of Independence, yet stop short of trying to expunge them from the movement; finally, intellectual omnivores such as Buckley never allow themselves to be identified with one conservative theorist or another. In the end, nearly all the competing schools of thought manage to co-operate.

Conservatism has reached an unacknowledged consensus about the outcome of the theoretical debates of the

'50s and '60s. The consensus holds, first, that someone has discovered the Holy Grail that will vindicate conservatism once and for all, otherwise why be a conservative in the first place? Second, it holds that, whatever the Grail actually is, it does not do any good to describe it with too much specificity. These beliefs contradict each other, yet the conservative consensus has proved remarkably stable.

Take, as a case study, libertarianism. Unlike most other right-wingers, libertarians have a distinct idea of what they stand for: less government. They also have, in free-market economics, the Right's most fruitful research program and, in F.A. Hayek, the only recent right-wing theorist to command serious attention from the Left. What libertarians do not have, however, is a comprehensive argument for their ideology.

Their failure to uncover this argument stems from no lack of trying. Even more than other right-wingers, libertarians love abstract debates over why their views are correct. Richard Epstein, for example, the brilliant libertarian law professor at the University of Chicago, subtitled his latest book, "A Modern Case for Classical Liberalism." It is his third contribution to the literature of libertarian apologetics, a somewhat occult genre dating back to the 1920s.

To put it bluntly, the genre is a failure. No economic model can prove that government interference in the economy by nature tends to do harm. While economics can show that some government programs will fail—rent control, say, or confiscatory tax rates—it cannot show that all government programs will fail. As for the various moral arguments for libertarianism, they are even weaker. Liberal theorists such as Ronald Dworkin and Amartya Sen have long since shown that libertarians simply fail to grasp the full dimensions of equal liberty, which does not demand, as libertarians would have it, that everyone should

be equally free to starve, but that everyone should have a fair chance to pursue his goals freely. This principle may require a more active government than libertarians would allow.

Most libertarians are chagrined, of course, to hear that they cannot justify their political views. The best-informed among them, however, know that no comprehensive argument for limited government exists. Hence, Richard Epstein acknowledges in *Skepticism*

doesn't need a Holy Grail. Nonetheless, conservatives should not let the intellectual restlessness of their early years give way to decadent complacency. It has happened before in American political life—to American liberalism—with unhappy consequences both for liberalism and the nation.

The story of liberalism's decline is often rehearsed these days, by rueful liberals and gleeful conservatives alike. Few, however, tell the more interesting

CONSERVATIVES SHOULD NOT LET THE INTELLECTUAL RESTLESSNESS OF THEIR EARLY YEARS GIVE WAY TO **DECADENT COMPLACENCY.**

and Freedom: The Modern Case for Classical Liberalism that recent scholarship has undermined the case for limited government—but nonetheless proffers the hope that classical liberalism can be vindicated once more. Charles Murray, in his 1996 book, *What It Means to Be a Libertarian: A Personal Interpretation*, made not the definitive argument for libertarianism but rather the argument that he thought would go furthest in convincing the non-libertarian. The most intelligent libertarians, in short, know libertarianism remains an ideology. Nevertheless, they still self-identify as libertarian, perhaps because they remain convinced that the decisive argument is just fingertips away.

What is true of libertarians is true of American conservatives in general. The wisest conservatives know that the Grail remains beyond their grasp. Yet, like Arthurian knights of old, they never give up hope that it is there.

Some may read this description of the American Right with bemused impatience. Conservatism doesn't need a master-philosopher; to the lofty theoretical disputes of the 1950s and '60s, they say good riddance. Perhaps they are correct: American conservatism

story of liberalism's ascendance. The vague sense still prevails that liberalism grew naturally out of 19th-century progressivism before culminating in the New Deal and reaching apogee in the Kennedy administration. This view owes less to history, however, than to liberals' conceit that theirs is the crowning American ideology.

Liberalism began not as an outgrowth of progressivism but as a reaction to it. The progressive movement, born out of fear of the centralizing tendencies of the Industrial Revolution, lacked intellectual foundations. Its leaders favored a farrago of policies that pitted the farmer against the urban sophisticate, the common man against the plutocrat, the native American versus the immigrant, and traditional religion against modern corruption. Progressives spoke the language of evangelical revival, famously exemplified by William Jennings Bryan's "Cross of Gold" speech. Often literally, they called on their fellow citizens to repent and return to the Lord.

As the Progressive Era waned, liberals viewed these populist enthusiasms with dismay. The people, in their view, remained stubbornly benighted, saw political problems in naïve moralistic

terms, and could not carry out the project of reform. Accordingly, liberalism's leading intellectuals began to fashion a new ideology that called for elite social scientists, rather than a virtuous populace, to address the problems of the modern world.

In his 1922 classic, *Public Opinion*, Walter Lippmann argued that ordinary people lacked the intellectual resources necessary for even the feeblest grasp of

Intellectual sclerosis, however, soon set in. Second-tier intellectuals such as Arthur Schlesinger and John Kenneth Galbraith took over from Lippmann and Dewey and began to take liberal ideology as a given. They proposed not new ways of understanding the world but new ways of advancing liberalism. In the hour of their triumph, liberals became blind to their own ideological shortcomings, which later became all too manifest.

IN THE HOUR OF THEIR TRIUMPH, LIBERALS BECAME BLIND TO THEIR OWN IDEOLOGICAL SHORTCOMINGS, WHICH LATER BECAME ALL TOO MANIFEST.

modern complexities. A piqued John Dewey then responded with *The Public and Its Problems*, billed as a refutation of Lippmann. It turns out, however, that Dewey conceded nearly all of Lippmann's points. The best he could contribute was the vague hope that with sufficient education, the people might eventually become capable of democratic government. Though Dewey's mind macerated in vacuous abstractions such as "democracy" and "experience," in the end his views differed little from Lippmann's: in Deweyan as in Lippmannian democracy, elite social scientists should rule.

Liberalism came of age in the New Deal, which finally succeeded in replacing representative government with a European-style administrative state, staffed by the nation's ablest, most idealistic men. After World War II, when the national mood no longer favored reform, liberals turned to an even more elite institution—the Supreme Court—to continue remaking American society. For a generation, liberalism so dominated American life that, while conservatives saw conservatism as the taste of a saving remnant, liberals became convinced that their ideology expressed the natural sentiments of the American people.

The rest of the story is well-known: in the 1960s and '70s, liberalism ran up against the "limits of social policy," failed to respond to crime and urban decay, lost its appetite for resisting Communism, exacerbated racial tension with policies based on wishful thinking, and surrendered the commanding heights of culture to New Left radicals. At the same time, liberals alienated ordinary people with their sympathy for criminals, race-rioters, anti-Americans, and moral libertines. As Nixon put it, the Democrats became the party of acid, amnesty, and abortion. They have been losing power ever since.

That same intellectual complacency may afflict the conservative movement today. (The reader may identify for himself where the blind spots exist and which will become conservatism's undoing.) Happily, however, original thinking on the Right can still be found. I can think of three examples.

On the libertarian side, a small group of academics affiliated with the journal *Critical Review* is quietly working a revolution. They forthrightly acknowledge that neither free-market economics nor moral philosophy have produced a comprehensive argument for libertarianism. Nonetheless, they argue, limited govern-

ment is still preferable because it mitigates the problem of public ignorance.

The majority of voters in a mass democracy, they reason, are stunningly ignorant of even the most basic political information. Moreover, to the extent that their voting behavior can be rationalized, they employ heuristics of the most obtuse sort: "Candidate X cares about people like me." As for the tiny but relatively well-informed elite, they too have limited intellectual resources for understanding current politics. Hence, they rely on naïve heuristics such as "Republicans are greedy, religious fanatics" or "liberals are hypocrites who only care about making themselves feel better."

The reliance on such heuristics can perhaps be explained in terms of rational economic decision-making—in that there is not enough time in the day to bother to learn much about politics—but, more deeply, in terms of evolutionary psychology. The human mind is too primitive to understand the complexities of modern politics. Democratic politics thus present a choice between the ideological rigidity of the elites and the sheer incompetence of the masses. We can escape this predicament only by reducing the role of government in our lives.

Only a small coterie of academics has any acquaintance with the ideas explored in *Critical Review*. This is no doubt the way they like it. With their thoroughgoing critique of modern democracy and their imperviousness to sentimental, patriotic gestures, their views will probably never become popular. Salutary reform in their minds can only occur at the behest of a knowledgeable and hidden elite.

Second, a loose network of what John O'Sullivan has called "evolutionary conservatives" attempts to understand politics in light of genetic science. Unlike many conservatives, evolutionary conservatives remain undaunted by the

apoplectic reaction of liberals to Charles Murray's *Bell Curve* and Dinesh D'Souza's *End of Racism*. Steve Sailer, for example, the most talented evolutionary conservative, writes with rigor and imagination on such scabrous topics as race, IQ, voting patterns, and national identity. Though other writers treat these ideas as taboo, perhaps because they seem to undermine American ideals of equality and self-reliance, evolutionary conservatives pride themselves on preferring truth to wishful thinking.

This attitude enables them to understand affirmative action and identity politics in a way that others cannot. More timid conservatives believe that if only we embraced the American Creed with sufficient fervor, we would become a color-blind society at last. As Thomas Sowell observes, however, every country that has racial or ethnic groups of differing economic achievement has adopted a system of preferences. Race relations seem to have an irreducibly tragic dimension; identity politics may well be a permanent feature of all multi-ethnic societies, often, as in Bosnia, Rwanda, or Sri Lanka (and perhaps Iraq) with calamitous results. Human biodiversity is important; we owe it to ourselves to try to understand it.

Finally, techno-skeptic conservatives, such as those who write for the journal *The New Atlantis*, are rallying to the defense of human nature. In essence, they spin clever arguments against things that people want, such as greater longevity and bodily health, on the grounds that they negate the nobler aspects of human life—love, honor, and piety.

With their frequent invocations of Huxley's *Brave New World* and C.S. Lewis's *Abolition of Man*, techno-skeptics sometimes write as if they have indeed found the conservative Holy Grail. Thus they identify the Fundamental Error of Liberalism with an attempt to deny people their full humanity and to

obscure the truth of who we really are. The techno-skeptics in essence accuse liberals of extreme misanthropy. Fair or not, this view has inspired some provocative thinking about what conservatives really stand for.

These three sources of fresh ideas on the Right have certain features in common. First, a preoccupation with modern science. Compared to them, the canonical works of postwar conservatism seem woolly and abstract. This is not surprising: the Cold War gave conservatives an armed ideological enemy, which provoked an ideological response. Second, the three schools are all either forthrightly or implicitly elitist. Like con-

servatives of the '40s and '50s, they do not expect that their ideas will be popular.

This elitism, perhaps an electoral handicap, is an intellectual strength. Original thinking often flourishes under conditions of intellectual marginality. Unfortunately, the conservative movement, having discovered a mass audience, risks squandering the intellectual marginality that once made it so interesting and daring.

In future years, it may take a smaller, elite group of right-wingers to animate conservative ideas once more. ■

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Bush vs. Benedict

Catholic neoconservatives grapple with their church's Just War tradition.

By Daniel McCarthy

FOUR MONTHS INTO the pontificate of Benedict XVI, the former Cardinal Ratzinger, it is too soon to say what will distinguish the new pontiff's tenure from that of his epochal predecessor—beyond the safe prediction that it will be shorter. But continuities are already clear: like John Paul II, Benedict will stand firm in the church's teachings on sexual morality and the sanctity of human life. And like John Paul II, the new pope is a man of peace whose vision for the world does not include wars of the sort lately waged against Iraq.

The priority Benedict places on peace was apparent even in his choice of name. The sixth century St. Benedict had brought monasticism to the West, becoming a patron saint of Europe. This

German pope reaffirmed the church's commitment to the historical heartland of Christianity by his choice—as if to say that Europe is not to be surrendered either to secularism or surging Islam. But above all, he paid tribute to Benedict XV, the “Peace Pope” who occupied the Throne of St. Peter in the harrowing days of World War I. The new pope made the connection explicit on April 27 in remarks he made at his first general audience:

I chose to call myself Benedict XVI ideally as a link to the venerated pontiff Benedict XV, who guided the Church through the turbulent times of the First World War. He was a true and courageous prophet of peace who struggled strenu-

ously and bravely, first to avoid the drama of war and then to limit its terrible consequences. In his footsteps I place my ministry, in the service of reconciliation and harmony between peoples, profoundly convinced that the great good of peace is above all a gift from God, a fragile and precious gift to be invoked, safeguarded and constructed, day after day and with everyone's contribution.

Conservatives of almost all stripes had cause to rejoice in Ratzinger's election, as even non-Catholics among them saw in him a man who would uphold the values dear to them. An ephemeral but telling sign of his support was the presence on the Internet of sites announcing themselves as the "Ratzinger Fanclub" and "Protestants for Ratzinger." The new pope would be a sure ally for the Right in the Culture War. But where hot wars are concerned, many of Ratzinger's most ardent admirers—Catholic neoconservatives especially—find themselves diametrically at odds with the pope.

Michael Novak, George Weigel, and Richard John Neuhaus are three of the most prominent Catholic neocons whose reading of Just War doctrine clashes with the views of John Paul II and Benedict XVI. Novak and Neuhaus fit the classic mold: they were radicals in the 1960s and early 1970s, both involved in protesting the Vietnam War. Neuhaus—a Lutheran pastor before his 1991 conversion to Catholicism—founded Clergy Concerned About Vietnam alongside Fr. Daniel Berrigan and Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel; Novak co-wrote with Heschel and Robert M. Brown *Vietnam: Crisis of Conscience*. By the 1980s, both had moved rightward, trading social democracy for Novak's "democratic capitalism." Today, they and Weigel, a biographer of John

Paul II whose ideological background is less exotic, champion an interpretation of Just War theory that strongly favors the foreign policy of George W. Bush.

Disseminating the views of Neuhaus, Novak, and Weigel—and often making bolder statements in defense of the administration than the big three themselves—are such journals as *Crisis*, co-founded by Novak, and *First Things*, established and until recently edited by Neuhaus. In October 2004, *Crisis* ran a cover story touting "The Case for an American Empire"; four months later, it published an article calling for the return of the draft. *First Things* has, by contrast, been more genteel, even publishing a debate on war and statecraft between Weigel and the Church of England's Rowan Williams. But a recent article by the journal's new editor, Joseph Bottum, suggests the underlying tendency. In "The New Fusionism," arguing for an alliance between neoconservatives and social conservatives, Bottum laments, "Much of the Roman curia seems to have fallen into a functional pacifism that threatens a damaging loss of the traditional Catholic theory of just war."

Writing in National Review Online—a venue not explicitly Catholic or neoconservative but colored by both—shortly after the death of John Paul II, University of Reading philosophy professor David Oderberg put the neocon line bluntly. "When it comes to applying tradition to life-and-death moral issues"—such as the Iraq War—"Bush 43 wins hands down over John Paul II." George Weigel or Michael Novak would never write such a thing, but the conclusion is one to which their arguments readily lead. Where foreign policy is concerned, for the Catholic neoconservative, it is Bush *si*, Benedict *no*.

The new pope and his predecessor have been consistent—some, like Osterberg, would say to a fault—in taking the most restrictive possible view in favor of

life in matters of capital importance, whether abortion, the death penalty, or war. Neoconservative Catholics have met this papal position with defiance. They point out, correctly, that abortion and war are not parallel—the former is wrong in all instances, the latter permissible in some. Novak and Neuhaus also take care to emphasize the wording of Section 2309 of the Catholic Catechism, which states that deciding when the conditions for a just war have been met "belongs to the prudential judgment of those who have responsibility for the common good"—meaning the Bush administration, as they would have it.

Yet war is a matter of both moral judgment and prudential judgment. The church is not competent to deduce the likelihood of strategic success or to address other purely prudential considerations of Just War doctrine. But there remain moral considerations in going to war about which a pope certainly can speak with authority, if not with infallibility. Neither John Paul II nor Benedict—whose intellect neoconservative Catholics have in other contexts praised—needs reminding about what the Catechism says. In Benedict's case, as head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, he supervised its recent abridgement. In a May 2003 interview reported by Rome's Zenit news service, Ratzinger was asked about the justice of the Iraq War in light of the Catechism. He agreed that Just War doctrine may require revision, as Weigel and other Catholic neoconservatives have suggested—but in a more, not less, restrictive direction.

The pope [John Paul II] expressed his thought with great clarity, not only as his individual thought but as the thought of a man who is knowledgeable in the highest functions of the Catholic Church. Of course, he did not impose this posi-

tion as doctrine of the Church but as the appeal of a conscience enlightened by faith. The Holy Father's judgment is also convincing from a rational point of view: There was not sufficient reasons to unleash a war in Iraq. To say nothing of the fact that, given the new weapons that make possible destructions that go beyond the combatant groups, today we should be asking ourselves if it is still licit to admit the very existence of a 'just war.'

As for "preventive war," Ratzinger flatly stated in September 2002, the "concept of a 'preventive war' does not appear in the Catechism of the Catholic Church." The then-cardinal's remarks also suggested that the United Nations, rather than George W. Bush, would be the proper public authority to decide upon war with Iraq: "the United Nations ... should make the final decision," he said. "It is necessary that the community of nations makes the decision, not a particular power."

The doctrine of papal infallibility does not, of course, extend to Benedict's remarks as a cardinal nor even, for that matter, to any of John Paul's opinions about the Iraq War, however well informed they were. But there is no mistaking the gravity of their views. If, as both men believed, the attack on Iraq in 2003 was unjust, support for the war becomes unconscionable. Novak, Neuhaus, and Weigel have spent much of their careers battling relativism, arguing forcefully that there is moral truth at the core of even the most contentious and divisive issues. There is a moral truth, they would surely agree, at the heart of the Iraq War—the justice of the war is not something that is ultimately moot or merely a question of perspective. The war in Iraq is a matter of moral right and wrong. Catholic neoconserva-

tives say it was right; Benedict says it was wrong.

Faithful Catholics of conservative disposition face a difficult choice here. Their president, the Republican Party, and the leading Catholic intellectuals who identify themselves as conservatives all support a policy that the pope opposes. Yet the antiwar movement seems at a glance to consist of people whose values are unalterably opposed to a Catholic's—a motley collection of secular leftists, many of them supporters of abortion and homosexual marriage. Even the history of faithful antiwar Catholics in America has since World War II been marked by radicalism and outright pacifism, from Dorothy Day and the Catholic Workers Movement to Fr. Daniel Berrigan.

There is, however, a conservative alternative, one that does not have the financial reach or media savvy of the neoconservative press but which has a long and venerable history and which agrees with the pope on hot wars and the culture wars alike. This brand of antiwar Catholicism is to be found in periodicals like *The Wanderer*, a 138-year-old newspaper based in Minnesota, and the considerably younger *New Oxford Review*.

The price paid by antiwar Catholic conservatives for upholding the pope's thought in foreign policy as well as in cultural battles at home has been ostracism from the respectable Right. Even the late Brent Bozell, a founding father of postwar conservatism—William F. Buckley's brother-in-law, ghostwriter for Barry Goldwater's *Conscience of a Conservative*—found himself marginalized after he and the Catholic magazine he founded, *Triumph*, began to grow critical of the Vietnam War. The conservative movement that has built itself a big tent in so many other respects still counts dissent in the foreign-policy arena as an excommunicable offense.

Yet in the end, American Catholics are not faced with a choice between conservatism and their faith—conservatives in the realist, anti-militarist traditions of George Kennan, Robert Nisbet, Russell Kirk, and the 1930s Old Right have always held foreign-policy views compatible with Benedict's. But between what commonly passes for conservatism today, as represented by the president's Iraq policy, and the vision of the pope there is an unbridgeable gap, on one side or the other of which American Catholics will have to take a stand.

Andrew Bacevich, himself a Catholic and a conservative, observes in *The New American Militarism*, "If in the aftermath of the Cold War a religious counterweight to the evangelical influence on U.S. policy were to have emerged, that counterweight ought to have been the Roman Catholic Church. Great in numbers, political influence, and material resources, with anti-Catholicism largely a thing of the past, the church was eminently well-positioned to put its stamp on public policy." But the opportunity was squandered by a hierarchy enmeshed in scandal. This makes the efforts of lay Catholic leaders and individual priests—people like Novak, Weigel, and Neuhaus—all the more important. Lately there have been hints that Neuhaus, at least, is beginning to re-evaluate his support for the Iraq War ("There is a lively and legitimate argument about whether, knowing what we know now, this war was justified and necessary") even as he still makes excuses for the president ("leaders do not have the convenience of making decisions retrospectively"). Perhaps Novak and Weigel, reflecting upon Pope Benedict's thought, will follow suit. More likely, Catholics in search of a consistent application of the principles of their faith to the realm of foreign policy will have to look to the periphery of the conservative movement—and, of course, to Rome. ■

Britain's Blowback

The attacks on London show that the Bush/Blair combination of war and multiculturalism is deadly.

By Stuart Reid

LONDON — We can take it, they say, and no doubt they are right. But London was better able to take it before we learned that three of the four suicide bombers were homegrown and that the fourth was from Jamaica, which is more or less the same thing. It was sobering news and quite took the wind out of our cocky sails. What had at first seemed shocking but manageable now seemed like something that could happen again and again.

The homegrown suicide bomber, it emerged, is just like his counterpart in Baghdad: he will slaughter anyone. He cares nothing for color, creed, race, or religion. And yet the suicide bomber does not operate in a political vacuum. George W. Bush supplied the context back in September 2001. In the War on Terror, said the president, those who are not with the United States are with the terrorists. Jacques Chirac and Gerhard Schroeder ignored the implicit threat. Tony Blair, however, wagged his poodle tail and signed up for what was to become a global democratic revolution. The Muslim world also took sides. Now London is on the front line.

Life goes on, meanwhile, but talk of the Blitz spirit is misleading. World War II was not at all like the War on Terror. For one thing, it was a real war; for another, it was winnable; for yet another, no one ever suggested it was not a war. Many Londoners behaved with exemplary courage and dignity during the Blitz; others, however, panicked and

looted and grumbled about the Jews. This time around, there has been no panic and no looting, and no anti-Semitism—unless you count the AP report that the Israeli embassy had been told about the bombs before they went off. The report was quickly withdrawn, though not before it had been pinged around the world by the usual gang of conspiracy theorists (who for some reason have my e-mail address).

Comparisons are being made not just with the Blitz but with the IRA campaigns in the 1970s and 1980s. In those days newspaper offices got fairly regular hoax bomb warnings. Sometimes the people in the back office passed them on to the staff over the public-address system. The convention was that printers left the building, but journalists remained where they were. It was a matter of honor. I have vivid memories of one such warning, in the hot summer of 1975, when I was a copy editor at the *Guardian*. The journalists stayed put—all, that is, except for a rather beautiful arts writer who had taken his shirt off and was sitting in the newsroom bare-chested. My desk was next to a huge window, and I took the precaution of shielding my face with my hand, thus ensuring that, had a bomb gone off, my knuckles would have ended up embedded in the remains of my cranium.

If there was no panic this round, there was some jumpiness. On the morning after the attack, hundreds of thousands

of Londoners stayed at home—or in the pub—some because they saw an excuse to take a day off but many because they did not dare use public transport. Bicycle shops did brisk business. (Watch it, chaps: 430 cyclists were killed or seriously injured on London's roads in 2003.) It emerged, furthermore, that since 9/11 some Londoners—a tiny minority, no doubt—have taken to moving from one Tube carriage to another, without raising the alarm, when they see what the transport authorities refer to as a “suspicious bag.” On my first post-bomb journey, I lasted only one stop before I swapped carriages. I did not like the look of the rucksacks being carried by two Mideastern-looking types. Nor did I like the look of the Mideasterners themselves. They had shifty, rather frightened eyes. No doubt they thought I had too.

Londoners weren't the only ones to get jumpy. The United States Air Force issued a “battle staff directive” ordering airmen not to visit London. Captain Jason McCree, spokesman for USAF Lakenheath in Suffolk, said, “We are taking prudent measures to ensure the security and safety of our airmen, civilians, their families and our resources.” No one can argue with the desire of an officer to look after his men, but it occurred to some of us that an American serviceman stands more chance of being killed in a flossing accident than in a bomb attack in England. In any case,

the order was withdrawn almost as soon as it was made public. Londoners could once again focus on President Bush's stirring response to the terrorist attack: "In this difficult hour, the people of Great Britain can know the American people stand with you."

In the House of Commons, George Galloway issued a challenge to the liberal consensus—that we were dealing here with an "evil ideology," nothing more—and was accused, by Adam Ingram, the defense minister, of "dipping his poisonous tongue into a pool of blood." Try this for poison: "I condemn the act that was committed this morning. I have no need to speculate about its authorship. It is absolutely clear that Islamist extremists, inspired by the al-Qaeda world outlook, are responsible. I condemn it utterly as a despicable act. ... Let there be no equivocation: the primary responsibility for this morning's bloodshed lies with the perpetrators of those acts." But—*forbidden word*, "but"—he added: "Does the House not believe that hatred and bitterness have been engendered by the invasion and occupation of Iraq, by the daily destruction of Palestinian homes, by the construction of the great apartheid wall in Palestine and by the occupation of Afghanistan? Does it understand that the bitterness and enmity generated by those great events feed the terrorism of bin Laden and the other Islamists? Is that such a controversial point? Is it not obvious?"

The mood in London in the immediate aftermath of the attack was a lot lighter than it seems to have been in some U.S. cities. On July 7, American friends and relations got in touch to find out whether we were still alive. We began to wonder what American networks had been broadcasting: you'd have thought that the Martians had landed. One lovely and very level-headed girl wrote, "I hope you are able

to spend the next few days staying close to home and taking care of each other." Our friends meant well, and we were touched by their concern.

South Park "conservatives" were a different matter. Check out www.secondbreakfast.net for its embarrassing "F*** YEAH" celebration of plucky little London: Rowan Atkinson! Benny Hill! Churchill! John Cleese! The Beatles! David Beckham! Monty Python! Margaret Thatcher! Kicking French butt over and over and over! F*** YEAH! You get the picture. These guys pick everything that is repulsive or clichéd about Great Britain and proclaim their "politically incorrect" love of it. Their gushings were, however, accompanied by grotesque pieties, beginning with an introductory moral health warning from the blogger-in-chief: "This is not to be callous in light of the horrors that happened today in London, but I thought our British friends could use as many gestures of support as possible." So

THESE GUYS PICK **EVERYTHING THAT IS REPULSIVE** OR CLICHÉD ABOUT GREAT BRITAIN AND PROCLAIM THEIR "**POLITICALLY INCORRECT**" LOVE OF IT.

determined were these people not to be callous, not to offend the tender sensibilities of their slow-witted readers that, "given the occasion," they struck Guy Fawkes from the list of great Britons. Oops. Close call. Coarse is OK, coarse is cool; but tasteless, truly tasteless, is ... well, it's not nice, is it?

A week after the bombings, millions of Londoners and millions of people worldwide—and 9,000 British troops in Iraq—observed two minutes' silence for the victims. I was at home and forgot, but in truth I do not much care for mass demonstrations of grief. My wife, in most respects a New York wiseguy, is more demonstrative, however, and

stood in silence with her coworkers in the East End. Later she gave money to a Cockney girl collecting for the victims and said she hoped that some of it would go to the bombers' families, since they are victims too. The Cockney said she hoped so too. There is a lot of anger in London, but there is also a great sense of sadness and pity, even pity for the bombers. One of the survivors of the Piccadilly line bomb, Angelino Power, a barrister, told an ITN reporter that anyone who could commit such an evil act deserved our pity.

In King's Cross a couple of days after the bombing, I met Brother Ben, of the Mustard Seed Evangelical Church, who said that the only way to respond to the horror was with love. We must love our enemies, he said. Sure, I said, but sometimes we must also kill them. No, said Brother Ben. Then you fight forever, and no one wins. Brother Ben was no theologian, but his simple faith was disarming, and his answer to evil is at least as good

as Tony Blair's, who proposes to defeat it by further reducing our liberties—by, for example, introducing ID cards—and by continuing to wage war against terror with all his might and main. One thing he won't countenance, however, is criticism of Islam. Like his pal George W. Bush, he will not say anything that might be construed as racist or in breach of the canons governing multiculturalism. At the same time, however, he is prepared to sacrifice innocent Arab life in the name of freedom and democracy. It hasn't worked; it won't work. ■

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Republic Undone

How militarism overtook American patriotism

By John Lukacs

IN THE BEGINNING of the third American century the United States found itself in a situation that was unprecedented and unexpected. It had become the only superpower of the world. In one sense this was the outcome of a Eurasian earthquake, the collapse of a Russian empire, which occurred largely without American intervention. In another sense, this was the result of a resurgent nationalism among the American people—something that most of them were mentally, and spiritually, comfortable with.

Many have attributed the collapse of the Soviet Union to Ronald Reagan: his massive armament program, they contend, forced the Soviet Union into bankruptcy. This was not so. The end of the Soviet Union was the result of a vast erosion of belief in Communism and in the benefits of its system, something of which Mikhail Gorbachev had become convinced. This man, largely without powerful external or internal pressures, dismantled the second-largest empire in the world within a few years. Why he acted thus had nothing to do with the American military budget, while it may have had much to do with the mysterious, guilt-ridden vagaries of the Russian soul.

That was not how Reagan, and the myriad of his followers, saw it. Their preoccupation was primarily with the evil of international Communism rather than with the geographical reality of Russia. The American propensity to identify the opponents of the United States as “Evil,” as the antitheses of

America the Good, made Americans overlook the weakness of the Russian empire. A result was the vast armament program on which Reagan and his government embarked: the federal defense budget more than doubled, from \$134 billion in 1980 to \$299.3 billion in 1990.

But more was involved than spending. The words, the voices, and the very gestures of this president showed a sentimental and somewhat puerile passion for the American military, from someone who spent World War II in Hollywood. Before that, even presidents who had once been generals employed civilian manners. But now there were Reagan’s fervent, sentimental expressions when speaking to American soldiers, sailors, and airmen. There was, too, his willingness to employ the armed forces in rapid and spectacular military operations against minuscule targets like Grenada, Nicaragua, and Libya.

No great harm was done in the short run. It behooves us to give credit to Reagan, who eventually concluded that Gorbachev was sincere, whereby no undue ideological obstacles remained against the gradual cessation of the Cold War. Creditable, too, was the reaction of the mass of the American people to this enormous historic change. In the warming climate, their animosity melted fast away.

The diminution of the Russian empire and other changes on the world scene during the 12 years of Reagan and the elder Bush were tremendous events of long-range consequence, leading to great changes both in the course of the

gigantic American ship of state and in its command structure.

But we ought to be aware of an attendant contemporary condition, which is the American people’s general lack of interest in and ignorance of these events. It was the slackness of interest in world affairs that probably led to the erosion of President George H.W. Bush’s popularity after the Gulf War, an erosion sufficient to result in Clinton’s electoral victory.

Of their “It’s the economy, stupid!”: the slogan of Clinton’s propagandists during that election campaign was an insufficient explanation. No fundamental, important, or radical changes had occurred in the economies and finances of most Americans in the early 1990s. There occurred a large inflation of paper values and sometimes of profits, contributing probably to Clinton’s electoral victories both in 1992 and 1996. But when that bubble finally burst in 2000, that was not why the “conservative” George W. Bush defeated Al Gore.

From the very beginning of his presidency, Bill Clinton, sinuous and alert, sensitive to the eddies and whirls of public opinion, revealed ever more obvious faults of character. His decisions were marked by a superficial opportunism and habit of prevarication. He was not much interested in foreign policy, leaving relevant decisions to other members of his government, sometimes with questionable results. During his second term he chose for his secretary of state Madeleine Albright, who, among other questionable endeavors, extended NATO to three Eastern

European states close to Russia. Clinton and Albright also intervened in the bloody civil and tribal wars of the former Yugoslavia.

The very presence and recent memory of Clinton was a handicap for the Democratic Party during the 2000 presidential campaign. Yet they had reasons to expect that Gore would triumph over the son of George Bush. Well before the election, Bush showed the shortcomings of a man whose mind and character were often astonishingly shallow. Yet he won the contest. A then hardly noticed statement of Bush was telling in what was to come: "It's great to be commander in chief of this nation." None of the presidents who governed this country during its great wars had defined themselves as commanders in chief. But, as Bush's expression and as forthcoming events would reveal, he had a great liking for this capacity.

On Sept. 11, 2001, the complacency of the American people and of their administration received a shock as dramatic as it was unprecedented. The president's first reaction was telling. He declared that the terrorists were "cowards" (which they were not; they were worse than that) and that this was "war" (which this was not either). Never mind: the American people, united in shock and dismay, rallied behind him. Understandably so. This was, after all, the first wounding attack inflicted on the continental United States since 1814.

Meanwhile, the self-appointed leader of anti-American terrorists of many kinds, Osama bin Laden, had fled to Afghanistan. In October 2001, American troops were flown into Afghanistan, where the Islamic fundamentalist Taliban regime was swiftly defeated. But now this president, spurred by his advisers and by his vice president, chose to pursue military glory. His advisers directed his attention to Iraq, led by the ruthless dictator Saddam Hussein.

There were presidents in the past who wanted war: Polk in 1846, Lincoln in 1861, McKinley in 1898, Roosevelt in 1941; but whereas all of them were convinced that war was a well-nigh inevitable and regrettable choice for the supreme cause of the nation's interest, this president seemed to relish the prospect. When it became evident that international inspectors were finding little evidence of weapons of mass destruction and when important foreign nations chose not to vote for a resolution of war, Bush declared war on his own, thereby dissipating the sympathy that most of the world had demonstrated for America on the morrow of the September 2001 disaster. Eschewing the constitutional requirement of a declaration of war by Congress, Bush had the support of his party (and, alas, of the majority of the American people), while the Democrats cowered in fear lest they be reputed insufficiently patriotic.

The invasion was, at first, a military success. The feared prospect of thousands rushing to Iraq in support of their brother Arabs did not happen, and Bush's pretext, the existence of horrible weapons "against mankind," did not exist. No matter: opinion polls suggested that for most Americans that had become irrelevant; they cheered the war on. What mattered was the invincibility and the glory of the American military. The Armed Forces of the United States were not only technically superior but also much larger than other armies of the world. The long-lasting effects of these conditions were of course incalculable. A perhaps less enduring effect was the obvious pleasure of George W. Bush in appearing as a supreme military personage. Thus he acted, and spoke, descending from the skies onto a giant American aircraft carrier and declaring that the war in Iraq was over. It wasn't. Chaotic conditions, and guerrilla attacks and bombing in Iraq (and Afghanistan), continued.

We have now seen that this militarization of the American presidency began with Reagan, whose vision of American greatness was inseparable from his vision not only of the globe but also of the universe, whence his announcement in 1983 of a project to ensure American domination in the celestial sphere. Twenty years later it was this global (though not yet cosmic) vision that had become something of a reality, enthusiastically supported by the majority of the American people: a kind of nationalism which, like most nationalisms (but unlike earlier kinds of patriotism), amounted to a substitute religion.

We can know very little about man's relationship to himself; we have but very few evidences (and certainly not definite or even ascertainable ones) of his relationship to God. What we can know, and what we can judge, are his acts and words, evidences and symptoms showing his relationship to other living beings. Likewise, a nation's behavior, its relationship to other nations, tells us something about its own character, its inclinations. Because of this, the term "foreign policy" is somewhat misleading, for that policy is not entirely "foreign." It reflects some of the preferences and the thoughts and beliefs of a people.

In the case of the United States, there is an additional problem: the discrepancy between the historical development of the American people and of the American state. Before World War I, the apparatus and the personnel of the State Department (and also of the War Department) had been much smaller than those of the governments of any comparable Great Power. But during World War II, and especially during the ensuing Cold War, they grew enormously. This went on, without abatement, during the past 20 years, at the same time when the knowledge of most Americans about the world lessened.

But then the coexistence of increasing activity with increasing ignorance is not rare in the history of nations.

The very conduct of American foreign relations changed apace with the enormous transformation of its bureaucracy. The old, spare, carefully selected and well-trained Foreign Service virtually ceased to matter or even to exist. The bureaucracy of American foreign affairs, of the presidency, and especially of “defense” kept inflating itself. On the highest level, secretaries of state began to be surrounded and jostled by advisers of “National Security,” duplicating and, in many cases, superseding the authority and the office of the secretary. Many of these

Finally, gathering speed during the Reagan years and then especially after 2000, the power of the Department of Defense over that of State grew—a condition that became manifest as well as endemic under the presidency of the second Bush, with the bellicose Donald Rumsfeld acquiring an influence wider and greater than that of the secretary of state, the sometimes hapless Colin Powell. Indeed, it was the secretary of defense and his close ally the vice president who set the course of the giant American ship of state.

Already in 1956, Section Nine of the Republican Party platform called for “the establishment of American air and naval bases all around the world.” (This

Republic, Poland, and Hungary, with American military bases established there. That this was accomplished during the Clinton presidency and not during a Republican one was proof of the persistence of the Wilsonian ideology of American internationalism—the temptation to believe that what is good for America is good for the rest of the world.

In the Middle East, the United States had interests even before the end of World War II: oil, the supposed danger of Soviet/Communist expansion, the state of Israel, Islamic and populist fanaticism. Of these, dependence on the first, with careful American planning of domestic oil consumption, could have been largely reduced; the second disappeared by 1990; but the third and the fourth were intimately combined. The United States chose to be the protector and guarantor of the state of Israel since the latter’s creation in 1948.

Not many Americans considered or perhaps even understood that Arab hatred of America was largely the result of its almost unconditional support of Israel. This support may not be entirely ascribed to the purpose of attracting American Jewish votes, to the powerful and resourceful Jewish lobbies, and not even to the considerable presence of Jews in high government positions, advising Bush and his allies. These factors were important. Yet more important, and more ominous, was this president’s impulsive reaction to the September 2001 catastrophe: “This is war!”

Long-range consequences of American arrogance were yet to be seen; more ephemeral was the rude attack on the French and German governments that were only contemplating their eventual right not to vote for the American plan in the United Nations. Such reactions as renaming French food or boycotting French wine were transitory and childish. More worrisome were the reports of

THE VERY CONDUCT OF **AMERICAN FOREIGN RELATIONS** CHANGED APACE WITH THE ENORMOUS **TRANSFORMATION OF ITS BUREAUCRACY**. THE CAREFULLY SELECTED AND WELL-TRAINED **FOREIGN SERVICE VIRTUALLY CEASED TO MATTER** OR EVEN TO EXIST.

powerful panjandrums were academics from the dubious discipline of “International Relations”; many of them were foreign-born. Some of them eventually became secretaries of state (Henry Kissinger, Albright); others who did not (Zbigniew Brzezinski) had sprung to the top of the celebrity heap, careful not to recoil.

Another element in the transformation of American diplomacy (if that term still applies) was the rapidly burgeoning intrusion of “intelligence” into the administration of American foreign relations. Some of the leaders of the CIA were decent and honest American patriots; but the very bureaucratic structure of the CIA made it dependent on politics. Its advice to the highest levels of government, including presidents, seldom dared to differ from the overall accepted ideological views and political desiderata of the White House.

was a party still called “isolationist” by some of its myopic liberal opponents.) Less than 30 years later, under Reagan, this desideratum had become a reality.

Still, the greatest and the most consequential event of the past 20 years was the break-up of the Soviet empire. This was a historical and geographical earthquake, far more important than the end of international Communism. The reactions to this event by both the American government and people were moderate. There was no gloating, no triumphalism as the Cold War came to an end. But, alas, this would not last.

Almost everywhere the Russians had retreated, the American empire advanced. Washington supported, even more than it welcomed, the breaking off of portions of the Russian empire. Contrary to assurances given to the Russians in 1989, NATO was extended to the former East Germany and then to the Czech

polls according to which a majority of Americans approved of Bush and the war even in the event that Iraqi weapons of mass destruction were never to be found. Nor were most Americans disturbed by the condition that the triumph of their troops in Iraq instantly led to: anarchy, criminality, and chaos.

Thus at the beginning of the 21st century this prevalence of a populist nationalism has become characteristic of American foreign policy. Yet much of this had begun to be propagated well before the emergence of terrorism in the Middle East. Already in the 1980s, and then during the collapse of the Russian empire, certain American intellectuals called for America's destiny and duty to govern the globe in the name of "freedom," going even beyond the universalist ideology of Wilsonianism ("making the world safe for democracy"). It is regrettable to record that many of these proponents were American Jewish intellectuals, the descendants of former Trotskyist or Stalinist or other Left-liberal families, now evidently enjoying the heady spirits of nationalism. For there are fellow travelers not only on the Left but also on the Right: people whose former fears become transmuted in the pleasurable feeling that they are admitted to the company of nationalists and haters. Their propagation of hatred against the Russian empire (in the view of ironical observers, it had taken them two generations to realize that Russians were anti-Semitic) went apace with their dismissal not only of Marxism but also of much of liberalism. Suddenly they became chief spokesmen not only of antiliberalism but for an American global domination without precedent.

At the beginning of the third American century the conditions of political and ideological and governmental commerce in the United States have become such that these neoconservatives could occupy influential positions

The London terrorist attack is reshaping how Europeans view their collective security, particularly regarding illegal immigration.

Italy, with its long, unprotected coastline, has been at the forefront of the battle against the waves of illegals entering Europe. In one week in June, the arid island of Lampedusa, south of Sicily, was overwhelmed by nearly 1,000 arrivals from sub-Saharan Africa seeking asylum. After London, Italy's Interior Minister Giuseppe Pisanu rushed reinforcements to Sicily and reopened some of its old border control points with Austria and Slovenia to stop infiltration from Greece and the Balkans. The Italian government believes that Italy will be the next target of a major terror attack because it has troops in Iraq. The attackers will likely come from the huge, illegal Muslim communities that have grown around major cities, particularly in the north. Police and Carabinieri officers backed by Italy's special antiterrorism unit, the DIGOS, are carrying out security sweeps in Turin, Florence, Bologna, Rome, and Naples. Italian public opinion has swung sharply to the right and some politicians are demanding that all illegal immigrants be expelled. In the midst of the outcry, an Italian court in the northern city of Brescia convicted two North Africans of belonging to an extremist group planning terrorist attacks against the Milan subway. The two men, Mohamed Rafik from Morocco and Kamel Hamraoui from Tunisia, were both illegal immigrants.



France has also responded to the London bombings with the unprecedented re-establishment of border controls with its European Union neighbors,

particularly Spain, to impede travel of North Africans into northern Europe. The French cited a safety clause in the 1995 Schengen open-border agreement permitting security measures in case of national emergency. Some politicians in Germany are calling for creation of a national anti-terror database and are urging the anticipated post-September-elections Christian Democratic government to crack down on immigrants. Anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim sentiment in France and Holland was a major contributing factor in the recent defeat of the European Union constitution. After London, that sentiment will no doubt become even stronger.



Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province's plans to introduce religious police are arousing concerns among Pakistani Christians and minority Shi'ites.

The new force, empowered to ensure that Muslims behave properly, is supposed to use persuasion rather than punishment. The police will be headed by a Sunni cleric and will be called the Hasba Force. Hasba means "accountability." Critics note that the new police would be similar to the Taliban's Department of Prevention of Vice and the Promotion of Virtue in neighboring Afghanistan, which forced people to pray, beat women if they were not covered head to toe, and compelled men to grow long beards to demonstrate their piety. North-West Frontier Province, which is deeply religious, has already banned music in public and has excluded men from any involvement in women's sports. It is also illegal for a male doctor to assist or examine a woman patient, even if she is dying. The province is governed by an alliance of religious parties called the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal.

Philip Giraldi, a former CIA Officer, is a partner in Cannistraro Associates.

on the highest level of a government that at the least seemed to relish their idea not only that the United States must “make the world safe for democracy” but that it must rule the world.

America “goes not abroad in search of monsters to destroy.” If so, this would involve the United States “beyond the power of extrication, in all the wars and interests and intrigue, of individual avarice, envy, and ambition... . She might become the dictatress of the world. She would be no longer the ruler of her own spirit.” These were the words of John Quincy Adams, the greatest of America’s secretaries of state, in his Fourth of July speech in 1821. In 1995, George F. Kennan, perhaps the greatest but surely one of the most principled American patriots in the 20th century, wrote that Adams’s statement was as timely as it had been 174 years before.

What stares in our faces now is a total repudiation of Adams’s warning by an American president and his government, by the leading American political party, by the most vocal of America’s public intellectuals calling themselves “conservatives,” with at least the tacit support of a majority of conservative Americans.

This is not the result of an ephemeral episode marked by an ephemeral president or of a sudden revolution. We have seen that their tendencies and ideologies began to come together and prevail more than 20 years ago. Their origins reside in an American duality of spirit and mind, of which “isolationism” and “internationalism” or “exceptionalism” and “universalism” are only inadequate designations.

The United States was created in the very middle of the Modern Age. At least in some sense, its war of independence and its constitution belonged to the Enlightenment. (In some sense only: because the American Revolution was very different from the French Revolu-

tion since the Founders depended much more on English and Scottish experiences, institutions, laws, education, and ideas than on French ones.) Having been a creation of the Modern Age was a great advantage. But it was also a handicap—the absence of intellectual traditions older than those of the so-called Enlightenment together with the persistence of the most dangerous idea and illusion of the Enlightenment, whether Parisian or Scottish: the limitless belief in Progress, resting on a shallow and mistaken view of human nature, the *homme machine* of the 18th century, with its jaunty and unthinking denial of complexity and sinfulness.

This is no longer a philosophical argument when, for the first time in human history, it is possible for human technology to destroy the world. Two hundred and fifty years ago all of mankind’s catastrophes, including epidemics, came from the outside. Now they can be manmade.

In the history of the world, the 20th century was the American Century, but much of the Americanization of the world was not dictated by the United States. Automobiliation, mass democratic practices, credit offered to the masses, cinematic entertainment were adopted by other peoples of the world without American political or even financial pressures. But a change has come. The United States has become a dictatress of much of the world, a circumstance cheered on by its own “conservatives.” This came together with a coarsening of the American people, of their manners and mores. When American presidents now don the garb of commander in chief, when American warplanes are named “Predators,” “Raptors,” “Black Hawks,” “Warhogs,” when the imaginations of millions of young Americans are inspired by monsters, dragons, dinosaurs, Star Wars, these are but superficial symptoms of a

national ideology resting on a dangerously shallow kind of spirituality: the belief that naturally, as ordained by God, Americans are the Chosen People of the Universe. Hence their propensity for naming all of their opponents Evil, the opposites of America the Good: a corrupt employment of Old Testament terms and a stunning evidence of a badly wanting national self knowledge.

That this is America’s destiny sounded in the words of those arrogant public figures who in May 2003 had been ringing their bells. (Soon they were wringing their hands.) They, too, are nearing a time when they will be faced with dreadful dilemmas: whether to prohibit the further applications of technology, whether to turn their backs on a diabolical notion of “Progress.”

History, because of Providence, also because of human nature, remains unpredictable. Human nature does not change, and the character of a nation, too, changes little, except in the long run. With all the faults of mass democracy, with all of the coarsening of their manners and morals, the people of the United States, including most of its assimilated millions of immigrants, have retained their historic characteristics: this is a people who are less enlightened than they think, yet they are generous, hardworking, and benevolent.

So we must hope that they begin to rethink the meaning of “Progress”; indeed, that they may begin thinking about thinking itself. That, and nothing else, means America being “the ruler of her own spirit.” ■

John Lukacs’s most recent book is Democracy and Populism: Fear and Hatred, published by Yale University Press in March. This article is adapted from A New Republic: A History of the United States in the Twentieth Century by John Lukacs (Yale University Press, 2004).

HOW CAN AMERICA RESTORE ITS INDUSTRIAL SELF-SUFFICIENCY?

The wealth that the US achieved in the early 20th century has been eroded by encouraging other countries to build their industrial base while not taking care to insure a domestic industrial future for ourselves.

This has been extensively documented and is evidenced by 30 years of trade deficits and the largest ever recorded trade deficit of \$617 Billion last year and a current account deficit of \$665 Billion - the US simply does not produce what it needs to sustain itself.

WHAT CAN WE DO TO CORRECT IT?

Awareness of our failing domestic industry

US consumers of many products including capital equipment now find that foreign imports or foreign-owned domestic producers provide a better value or quality than domestic counterparts, if those even exist.

Other countries are taking unfair advantage of our free markets

Our current policies are failing to stimulate competitive domestic industries sufficient to sustain the US. We cannot cope with predatory practices of China and Japan, who take advantage of our free and open markets but themselves utilize subsidies, protectionism, and below-cost pricing to undermine and destroy our industrial base.

These unsustainable US trade deficits for 30 years are destroying this country. To remain a world class productive country, major (perhaps revolutionary) changes need to take place, taxes, subsidies, and/or tariffs as needed. There are several options, for example:

1) Protectionism

By closing the trading borders, domestic demand may be met with increased industrial domestic investment. However, in limiting foreign goods, US consumers will not be able to afford much needed goods until domestic industry catches up. There is also the risk of encouraging domestic monopolies.

2) Government direct investment

For industries that do not provide

sufficient return for risking private capital, there should be a way to employ public money to benefit the entire country. This is what happens with government healthcare programs, military, public transportation, and other national security programs. There should be some mechanism to insure that core commodity industries (like steel and transportation) that form the basic platform for a self-sufficient industrial country should be maintained even if these commodity industries themselves are not profitable to private investors competing against foreign subsidized state-run companies.

Examples from other countries

Japan through its Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) has very successfully helped provide leadership and assistance for development of industrial productivity and employment while maintaining a flourishing capitalistic economy. According to the Federation of American Scientists (FAS), "*MITI facilitated the early development of nearly all major industries by providing protection from import competition, technological intelligence, help in licensing foreign technology, access to foreign exchange, and assistance in mergers.*"

MITI is a successful case study in how the Japanese government can work with its industry to stimulate core sectors that serve the entire country without attempting to establish a centrally planned economy.

The FAS continues: "*MITI served as an architect of industrial policy, an arbiter on industrial problems and disputes, and a regulator. A major objective of the ministry was to strengthen the country's*

industrial base [by encouraging investment through incentives and selection of most needed products and development procedures to be developed that would benefit their most important industries like steel and robotics].

It did not manage Japanese trade along the lines of a centrally planned economy, but it did provide their industries with administrative guidance and other direction, both formal and informal, on modernization, technology, investments in new plants and equipment, and domestic and foreign competition."

Take the best that other countries have to offer and refine it with our own experience and objectives.

By doing nothing we are bound to be buffeted by those other countries that have a strong plan to continue to dismantle our industry and economy.

The results speak for themselves

Industrial success has led to a Japanese \$181 Billion current account surplus with the rest of world last year compared to a US \$665 Billion current account deficit with the rest of world. Japan has used intelligent planning as opposed to our unplanned industrial regression (e.g. the auto industry). Japan is accomplishing this from a zero base of ashes from the end of WWII with 4% of our land area, 40% of our population and no natural resources. Their example shows there are better ways, that major changes should take place immediately or we will soon be relegated to a 2nd class power with a much lower standard of living.

Learn more at www.EconomyInCrisis.org.

ECONOMY IN CRISIS
CREATING AWARENESS OF OUR TRUE ECONOMIC CONDITION

Made in Japan

Tokyo's trade strategy sacrifices neither workers nor high-tech leadership.

By Eamonn Fingleton

FOR MORE THAN a decade now we have been told that the world's most advanced economies face a common fate in this era of Chinese economic expansion: massive layoffs in manufacturing and ever-rising trade deficits. Indeed, if American press reports are to be believed, Japan has even more to fear from the Chinese economic threat than the U.S. Supposedly, key Japanese industries such as electronics are being rapidly eviscerated by low-wage Chinese competition. Such reports, suggesting that there is something inevitable and inexorable about the decline of manufacturing in advanced nations, have served powerfully to tranquilize American public opinion at a time when America's trade deficits have gone from merely horrendous to truly disastrous.

It is past time these reports were exposed for the propaganda they are. No nation's trade position has suffered as much from China's rise as the United States'. Quite the reverse. Many of America's key economic competitors have, on balance, strongly benefited from China's industrialization. Of these the most notable example is, oddly enough, Japan.

Consider this little publicized fact: Japan's current-account surplus last year totaled \$181 billion. This was a record for any nation in world history. It was more than 2.5 times China's 2004 current-account surplus. More to the point, it was three times Japan's surplus of 1989, the peak year of American concern about Japan's "juggernaut" trade policies.

The truth is that Japan has closely cooperated with China's desire for export-led growth—yet it has found ways of doing so that also boost its own exports. Hence another rather significant unpub-

licized fact: Japan exports more to China than it imports. Its surplus with China in 2004 ran to nearly \$14 billion, up 17 percent from 2003.

Just as in the case of the United States, outsourcing to China has played a major role in corporate Japan's production arrangements in recent years. There the similarity ends. Unlike the United States, Japan believes in managing its trade. Although Japanese officials recognize that consumers can benefit from trade, they also recognize that people need jobs and incomes before they can consume. Thus where imports might pose a significant threat to Japanese jobs, the Japanese government works to minimize the damage.

Besides influencing the pace of outsourcing, Japanese policymakers ensure the trend does not entail the leakage abroad of the nation's key production technologies. Thus individual corporations are not permitted unilaterally to transfer advanced technologies to foreign operations.

If this seems impossibly complicated to administer, it isn't. Much of the control stems semi-automatically from Japan's distinctive labor regulation. In principle, employers are foresworn from making layoffs. This principle is applied flexibly: exceptions are permitted in the case of struggling small firms as well as corporate dinosaurs in near-terminal financial difficulties. But as a practical matter, layoffs are not an option for any healthy mainstream Japanese corporation.

Whereas American chief executives are much concerned with pandering to the whims of securities analysts, a typical Japanese chief executive is necessarily

focused on long-term production planning. His principal concern is to create new and ever more productive work for his Japanese colleagues at every level, not least the newest recruits who can be expected to be on the payroll 30 years hence. To this end, he will make sure that, among other things, the corporation spends heavily on research and development.

He will also probably try to focus this spending mainly on developing efficient new production technologies, which provide a much more lasting benefit in terms of secure long-term jobs than, say, designing new products.

All this means that a Japanese chief executive's attitude to outsourcing will almost automatically be closely aligned with the Japanese national interest. Because he cannot easily shed labor at home, he will move production activities abroad only after he has lined up new and better work—either more capital intensive or more know-how intensive or both—for his domestic workers.

By way of example, a Japanese television manufacturer might move assembly operations to China only after redeploying its domestic assembly workers to make liquid crystal displays. This latter activity can be at least 10 times as capital intensive as assembling television sets.

As a practical matter, in the early stages of the trend for American corporations to outsource to China, Japanese corporations held back. But lately they have caught up and now outsource almost all routine assembly work. For both Japan and China, this is win-win. In a textbook illustration of the principle of comparative advantage, Japan does the

capital-intensive work supplying high-tech components to China's low-wage assembly plants. The net effect has been a huge increase in global output of everything from mobile phones to game machines—with a resulting benefit to the world's consumers in ever lower prices and ever greater functionality.

In geopolitical terms, the result is that Japan is now far more securely in the lead in advanced manufacturing than it ever was in the late 1980s. This does not show up in American trade statistics because much of what Japan sells to the United States these days comes via final assembly plants in China and thus is counted for American statistical purposes as "Made in China."

While Japan is the most spectacular example of a nation that has secretly leveraged Chinese industrialization to the advantage of its export industries, it is hardly alone. This should be obvious from the fact that China's surplus with the United States exceeds its surplus with the world as a whole. In other words, while China is a huge net exporter to the United States, it is actually a major net importer from the rest of the world.

It is fair to say that, in common with Japan, many of the world's other advanced manufacturing nations are using China as an export pipeline through which to sell to the United States. It is also fair to say that, not for the first time, Uncle Sam is being treated as the world trading system's ultimate patsy.

Why isn't all this better understood? A key factor is the Washington trade lobby. So skilled has it become in spinning the story that it has succeeded in pulling the wool over the eyes of countless analysts at supposedly independent think tanks.

Another factor is the perennial naivety of American foreign correspondents. The problem is particularly acute in Tokyo, where the local English-language press functions shamelessly as the Japanese Foreign Ministry's propa-

ganda arm. The message in recent years has been that Japanese industry is almost ludicrously dysfunctional—and therefore is quaking in its boots at the rise of Chinese manufacturing. The tone of desperation was nicely encapsulated in an op-ed article recently by corporate chieftain Nobuyuki Idei. Under the headline "Nation's competitiveness must be recovered," Idei bemoaned Japan's allegedly widespread economic inefficiency and a general decline in competitiveness. But how inefficient can a nation be if it boasts the largest trade surplus in world history and pays some of the world's highest wages? (Japanese wages now run about 20 percent higher than American levels.) Idei,

of course, did not mention these points. Also left unsaid was the fact that Idei's own corporation has multiplied its dollar-denominated sales nearly fourfold over the last 15 years.

What should the United States do? Clearly it cannot—and should not—attempt to emulate everything a highly regulated nation like Japan does. But it could make a start by doing some things that, until recently at least, have always been in the best American traditions—like being honest with itself. ■

Eamonn Fingleton is a Tokyo-based economic commentator. This article is based on a presentation he made to the United States-China Commission.

Violence Against Families

Fathers fall victim to domestic-abuse laws.

By Stephen Baskerville

FEMINISTS ARE PLAYING the victim card with a vengeance, mostly because it is the only card left, with sympathy for feminism's strident campaigns at a low point. Yet beneath the media radar, victimhood has helped feminism advance virtually unopposed to aggrandize power in realms few perceive.

Victim politics requires exploiting traditional gender roles. This does not mean feminism has moderated; simply that it has exchanged ideological purity for power. Much as Stalinism inherited the habits of czarist absolutism and nationalism, feminism now exploits the stereotype of helpless damsels in distress and the public's good intentions.

Today's foremost case in point is the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), currently up for reauthorization in Congress. VAWA appeals to mom-and-apple-pie sentiments: what legislator can

oppose protecting women? The bill commands bipartisan sponsorship, and its renewal in 2000 was mostly unopposed.

Yet VAWA illustrates a serious problem with political conservatism and demonstrates how the Left advances despite its unpopularity. More than a failure of nerve, VAWA exemplifies a trend not so much to discard traditional values as to politicize them. Politicians can posture as champions of motherhood and family while turning them over to the safekeeping of the state. Thus domestic-violence legislation is pitched as an appeal to male chivalry, and Republicans are quick to volunteer. In contrast to traditional chivalry, however, today's political version does not proceed from personal duty and requires no risk or heroism. The galantry feminists demand is bureaucratic, exercised by functionaries who wield

state power that they expand as a result.

"Domestic violence" is now a vast and growing government industry. Yet the term has never been clearly defined. Given that criminal statutes against violent assault already exist, precisely what purpose is served by laws creating special categories of crime of which only some people can be victims? Domestic violence designates criminals politically, in terms of their membership in a group rather than acts they have actually committed. It also creates crimes based on relationships rather than deeds. Conflict that is not criminal between strangers becomes a crime between "intimate partners."

Whereas criminal assault charges require due process of law, designating a matter "domestic violence" circumvents constitutional protections. Law-abiding citizens are issued "restraining orders" that do not punish them for illegal actions but prohibit them from otherwise legal ones. Because violent assault is already punishable, the only people effectively restrained are peaceful ones.

Men's groups complain that VAWA excludes male victims and point to research showing that men are equally likely to be victims of domestic assault. Yet something more than "gender bias" is at work. Though advertised to protect women, VAWA's provisions are better seen as weapons in divorce and custody battles. As Thomas Kasper writes in the *Illinois Bar Journal*, measures funded by VAWA readily "become part of the gamesmanship of divorce." Groups like the New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence lobby strenuously on custody laws, using unverifiable assertions like "80% of fathers who desire shared custody of their children fit the profile of a batterer."

Restraining orders are routinely issued without any evidence of wrongdoing to criminalize fathers' contact with their own children. "Restraining orders and orders to vacate are granted

to virtually all who apply," and "the facts have become irrelevant," writes Elaine Epstein, former president of the Massachusetts Women's Bar Association. "In virtually all cases, no notice, meaningful hearing, or impartial weighing of evidence is to be had."

Even feminists backhandedly acknowledge what the social-science literature clearly establishes: domestic violence and child abuse are overwhelmingly phenomena not of intact families but of separated and separating families and that the safest environment for women and children is a two-parent home. By encouraging marital breakup, VAWA exacerbates the problem it ostensibly exists to solve.

VAWA also blurs the distinction between violent crime and ordinary disagreement. Federally funded groups like the National Victim Assistance Academy (NVAA) and the Justice Department itself use vague and subjective terms to define "violence" where none took place: "extreme jealousy and possessiveness," "name-calling and constant criticizing, insulting, and belittling the victim," "blaming the victim for everything," "ignoring, dismissing, or ridiculing the victim's needs."

If domestic violence were a major problem, one would expect limited resources to be reserved for serious cases and those concerned about true violence to resist this cheapening of the language whereby the stuff of lovers' quarrels becomes grounds for arrest. Instead, activists use vague terms to imply criminal violence where none has taken place. In *The Battered Woman*, psychologist Lenore Walker excuses a woman who violently attacked her husband because he "had been battering her by ignoring her and by working late."

Though part of VAWA was declared unconstitutional on federalist grounds, the judiciary refuses to pass constitutional review. On the contrary, it is

implemented by the very judiciary that is normally expected to protect constitutional rights. Strikingly, judges openly acknowledge the unconstitutionality—and their own indifference to it. "Your job is not to become concerned about all the constitutional rights of the man that you're violating as you grant a restraining order," New Jersey municipal court Judge Richard Russell told fellow judges at a government-run training seminar in 1994. "Throw him out on the street, give him the clothes on his back and tell him, 'See ya around.'"

VAWA also funds special courts to administer not equal justice but feminist justice: ideological justice reminiscent of the French Revolution's political tribunals or Hitler's dreaded "people's courts." Some 300 "integrated domestic violence courts" now operate nationwide. In New York, Chief Judge Judith Kaye declares that the courts are created not to dispense impartial justice but to facilitate punishment: "to make batterers and abusers take responsibility for their actions."

These courts bear little relation to most Americans' understanding of due process. There is no presumption of innocence, hearsay evidence is admissible, and defendants have no right to confront their accusers. Even forced confessions are extracted. Warren County, Pennsylvania, requires fathers like Robert Pessia, on pain of incarceration, to sign prefabricated confessions stating, "I have physically and emotionally battered my partner." The father must then describe the violence, even if he insists he committed none. The formulaic documents state, "I am responsible for the violence I used. My behavior was not provoked."

VAWA also subsidizes ideological advocacy of feminist organizations. Though Republicans in particular are feeding a mouth that bites them, the larger principle is whether taxpayers should ever sponsor political ideology. "If there is any

fixed star in our constitutional constellation,” wrote Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson, “it is that no official, high or petty, can prescribe what shall be orthodox politics, nationalism, religion, or other matters of opinion.”

Especially questionable is federal funding of lobbying by judges, who are professionally obligated to be apolitical. The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ)—consisting of judges who sit on actual cases and are required to be impartial—receives federal support to attack fathers’ groups and fathers themselves for being “at odds with the safety needs of the rest of the family.” Can fathers

be excluded from categorization as domestic violence: shootings in the back, hired killers, midnight castrations, attacks with cars. Not only does this violence seldom elicit public sympathy; it is not foremost among the terrors of men themselves. “The most common theme among abused men is their tales not of physical anguish but of dispossession,” writes Patricia Pearson in *When She Was Bad*, “—losing custody of children due to accusations of physical and sexual abuse.” “They may never see their children again,” says Philip Cook, author of *Abused Men*. “They don’t feel that they will get a fair shake in the courts regarding custody no matter

“women (the majority of whom are natural mothers) murder children 31.6 times more often than do natural fathers.” A study by the Family Education Trust found children are up to 33 times more likely to be abused in a home without a father.

This is precisely the home environment VAWA subsidizes. Judges claim they remove fathers, even without evidence of abuse, to “err on the side of caution.” In fact, they are erring on the side of danger, and it is difficult to believe they do not realize it. Recalling Dickens’s observation that “the one great principle of the ... law is to make business for itself,” the domestic-violence industry appears to be making business for itself by creating the environment conducive to child abuse.

Appalling as this sounds, this proceeds from the logic inherent in all bureaucracies: to perpetuate the problems they ostensibly exist to address. It gains plausibility from the verbal smoke-and-mirrors domestic-violence activists employ. “Adult domestic violence and child maltreatment often occur together,” says Meredith Hofford of the NCJFCJ, “with the same assailant responsible for both.” Hofford provides no documentation, but to the extent it is true, the “assailant” is likely to be not the father but the single mother. Hofford herself wants more money to “support” what she describes as “battered women who maltreat their children.” This spiral of more funding to address the “needs” created by the previous funding illustrates how the domestic-violence juggernaut, and with it the crisis of family dissolution and fatherless children, will continue to expand until we learn to ignore hysterical people whom the government pays to cry wolf. ■

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NATURAL FATHERS COMMIT A SMALL FRACTION OF CHILD ABUSE.

summoned before these judges expect equal justice? NCJFCJ advocates administrative termination of paternal rights, termination of fathers’ rights to see their children with no evidence of violence, ignoring officials who question abuse allegations, ignoring visitation orders, re-education of judges, and labeling law-abiding American citizens who criticize the government as “dangerous.” They even seem to endorse the fabrication of evidence and a presumption of guilt. NVAA’s Jacobin-style agenda is likewise endorsed and disseminated by the Justice Department: “establish a Family Violence Coordinating Council,” “implement a massive community education program,” “specialized domestic violence courts, and vertical prosecution,” “fast track domestic violence prosecutions through priority docketing,” “electronic monitoring,” and “warrantless searches of their persons or homes.”

The complaint that VAWA excludes the large percentage of male victims is not petty. Men are much more likely to experience violence that is premeditated or contracted and which may be

what happens or what she does. And it’s actually true. There are many cases ... in which a woman who was actually arrested for domestic violence still receive[d] custody of the children.” Losing custody is not the only danger: “A battered man knows that if his wife has been abusing him, she has often been abusing the children,” writes Warren Farrell. “Leaving her means leaving his children unprotected from her abuse.”

Here we arrive at the most insidious consequence of the moral grandstanding by VAWA’s champions. Though advocates rhetorically intermingle child abuse with domestic violence, natural fathers commit a small fraction of child abuse; the overwhelming bulk is committed in single-parent homes. “Contrary to public perception,” write Patrick Fagan and Dorothy Hanks of the Heritage Foundation, “the most likely physical abuser of a young child will be that child’s mother, not a male in the household.” Fathers commit 6.5 percent of child murders, according to a Justice Department study. The Department of Health and Human Services found that

Two Women & a War

Ready use of force and resolve to “stay the course” could be our downfall.

By Owen Harries

AT THE RISK OF BEING labeled a male chauvinist, I wish to point out that two of the most unfortunate—and dangerous—political comments made over recent decades have been made by women: Madeleine Albright and Margaret Thatcher.

Start with the former. In 1994, Albright—then American ambassador to the UN, past professor of international affairs, future U.S. secretary of state—asked an astonished Gen. Colin Powell (“I thought I would have an aneurysm”) a question: “What is the point of having this superb military that you’re always talking about if we can’t use it?”

Whether the question was genuine or rhetorical, Powell had every right to be startled, for it was an amazing one for a person of Albright’s background to have posed because, for the previous half century, her country had followed a policy that demonstrated powerfully the wisdom of having immense military power and not using it.

That policy was called deterrence, and its very point was to make recourse to the actual use of force unnecessary. It was brilliantly successful. It saw the U.S., and the world, through several tense decades without disaster and led finally to the collapse of America’s adversary. (The most serious U.S. setback during these years occurred when it did resort to committing its military force actively in Vietnam.)

In response to all this, and in support of Albright and the legion of others who have more recently advocated the ener-

getic use of American military might, it could be argued (and has been in a U.S. official document, the *National Security Strategy of the United States*) that that was then and this is now. There is no longer a threatening but rational adversary that should be and could be deterred; there are only fanatical terrorist organizations, which cannot be deterred but which should be and can be destroyed.

There is some truth in this, but it is very important to establish its limits. Yes, after 9/11 al-Qaeda had to be hunted down and destroyed, and that hunt should continue until Osama bin Laden is either captured or killed.

But there is no reason to believe that Iraq could not have been dissuaded from using its (as it happens, nonexistent) weapons of mass destruction by a policy of deterrence. Saddam Hussein was a vile and cruel tyrant, but he was not a suicidal fanatic and he did possess vulnerable fixed assets.

It is still a fundamental strategic axiom that the availability of means should not determine ends, and there are very powerful reasons why the U.S., even as the “sole remaining superpower,” should be very parsimonious in using its military force actively.

One is that it is only thus that it can preserve the invaluable mystique of its military power. Consider the prestige that the U.S. military had in the year 2000 and compare it with its standing now. Then, U.S. military power was universally considered to be awesome in its scope and irresistible in its application.

Today, after its deployment in Iraq, the world is much more aware of its limitations and less impressed: aware that while it has an enormous capacity to crush and destroy, its ability to control, to impose and maintain order is far less; that while its technology is superb, the human resources at its disposal for protracted occupation or multiple engagements is seriously limited and the quality of its civilian and military leadership questionable.

The United States’ military prestige—and therefore its ability to impose its will without recourse to force—has been seriously diminished by Iraq. This will encourage rather than deter its potential enemies.

A second reason the U.S. should be extremely reluctant to share Albright’s enthusiasm for the ready use of force is that its internal consequences are almost certain to be adverse.

American wars that result from anything less than a direct attack on the U.S., and which continue for any length of time, are more than likely to divide the country bitterly.

This happened in the case of Vietnam and it is happening now. The Army and even the Marines are finding it difficult to attract recruits and have found it necessary to compel soldiers to stay in the service beyond the terms of their contracts.

Barry McCaffrey, a well-informed and, up to now, dedicated supporter of the war, has recently maintained, “The U.S. Army and the Marines are too under-manned and under-resourced to

sustain this security policy beyond next [autumn]. They are starting to unravel.”

But these are not the only adverse consequences of a ready resort to the use of military force, not at least in the eyes of those who are hostile to big government. For one of the consequences of war is that it inevitably increases the scope and power of the central government responsible for waging it. It is one of the internal contradictions of American neoconservatism that it simultaneously pursues a domestic policy that seeks to reduce the scope of government and a foreign policy that is bound to increase it.

Today we are witnessing in the U.S. not only substantial increases in government expenditure, but a serious diminution of the rule of law in the form of a partial suspension of *habeas corpus*, a circumventing of the Geneva Convention, a justification of the use of torture, and greater secrecy. (As I write, it is reported that the Bush administration is classifying documents at the rate of 125 a minute or, if my arithmetic is accurate, 180,000 a day!)

One last, but vital, adverse consequence of a ready resort to force by the U.S.: it will provide an extremely unfortunate standard of acceptable behavior for emerging great powers—the Chinas and Indias and Pakistans and Brazils—that will be leading players in a decade or two. Much has been written about America’s role as the setter of new norms.

But what norms are being set by ventures such as Iraq and by claims to greatly expanded rights to initiate preventative or pre-emptive war? And how much will they come home to haunt future generations who have to live with them?

Which brings me to the second unfortunate and potentially dangerous remark to which I referred in the introduction. In 1980, early in her prime-ministership, Thatcher made a speech at the Conservative Party conference in which she

famously said, “The lady’s not for turning.” It was said in a particular context and in that context was unexceptional.

But the phrase was, with her encouragement, to become emblematic of Thatcher’s whole political style, to her admirers evidence of conviction, courage and authenticity, of rising above compromise and calculation and mere politics. It represents the qualities that make Thatcher such an idolized figure among American neoconservatives today.

The point I wish to make is a simple one: while it may be appropriate and even admirable in a particular situation (for example, in 1940, when the stark choice was either defiance or disaster in the form of surrender to Nazi Germany), as a general approach to political action a commitment to hold undeviatingly to a line of action, regardless of circum-

stances, it is worth emphasizing that the issue is not some test of character but a matter of cold political calculation. In themselves, firm resolution and unbending determination are not political or military virtues. Before deciding to complete what one has started, it is necessary to give serious consideration to a number of vital questions: Is the mission a realistic one? Is it vital for the United States’ national interest? Do circumstances favor its completion within an acceptable time frame? How great a cost—in terms of blood, treasure, moral standing, political reputation, alternative use of resources, domestic harmony—does it justify? And, in the specific case of Iraq, is the mission reducing the threat of terrorism or creating its most fertile breeding ground yet?

IT IS ONE OF THE **INTERNAL CONTRADICTIONS** OF AMERICAN **NEOCONSERVATISM** THAT IT SIMULTANEOUSLY PURSUES A **DOMESTIC POLICY** THAT SEEKS TO **REDUCE THE SCOPE OF GOVERNMENT** AND A **FOREIGN POLICY** THAT IS BOUND TO **INCREASE IT**.

stances or consequences, is foolish and dangerous.

Napoleon showed iron determination and undeviating dedication when he marched on Moscow. The British generals of World War I showed the utmost steadfastness in sending men across the open fields of the Somme and into the bottomless mud of Passchendaele. Hitler was not for turning at Stalingrad.

At another level, Thatcher’s own insistence on doing it her way, and her contempt for the collegiate responsibility and compromises of cabinet government, were ultimately to cause her downfall a decade after she made that remark.

Today, as President Bush insists over and over again that we must “stay the course” and “complete the mis-

As always in politics, circumstances are crucial. To ignore them and to insist that the mission must proceed regardless is to invite recourse to that old play on Kipling’s lines: “If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs, you have probably misunderstood the situation.” Sen. Chuck Hagel virtually said as much last month: “The White House is completely disconnected from reality. It is like they’re just making it up as they go along. The reality is that we’re losing in Iraq.” ■

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Arts & Letters

FILM

[*Hustle & Flow*]

From Pimp to Lyrical Gangsta

By Steve Sailer

HIP-HOP FIRST HIT the Top 40 way back in 1979 with the amusing “Rapper’s Delight” by the Sugarhill Gang. At the time I thought, “What a cute novelty record—I bet that style will be around for a year, maybe even two!” Little did I anticipate that decades of stylistic innovation by African-Americans were coming to an end and that rap would turn out to be the black hole that entrapped black talent for, apparently, all eternity.

Hip-hop kept its goofy aura through the mid-’80s, when the biggest selling rap record was “The Super Bowl Shuffle” by the Chicago Bears NFL team.

Then gangsta rap emerged from Los Angeles and New York. By promoting the drug dealer’s code of what a boy had to do to be a man, it helped spread the crack wars across the country. By 1993-94, the murder rate had quadrupled among black 14- to 17-year-old youths born in the late ’70s (which was after *Roe v. Wade*, as economist Steven D. Levitt conveniently forgot to mention while pushing his abortions-cut-crime theory in the bestseller *Freakonomics*).

Fortunately, the generation born in the ’80s started to grasp that they could

listen to gangsta rap without living it, but the damage had been done. In New York City today, there are 36 percent more black women than black men alive.

It says much about contemporary values that the Audience Award at the Sundance film festival was won by the indie crowd-pleaser “Hustle & Flow,” the purportedly uplifting story—“Everybody gotta have a dream”—of a pimp striving to find redemption by becoming a gangsta rapper.

Perhaps we will next be treated to a heartwarming movie about a Gestapo agent aspiring to qualify for the Death’s Head SS. If, as the hype claims, “Hustle & Flow” is the new “Rocky,” well, then Jeff Gannon should be pitching Hollywood about his rise, such as it was, from militaristic manwhore to Bush administration shill.

A certain moral distinction is being overlooked by the critics. Sure, Rocky starts out as hired muscle for a loan shark, but after he goes 15 rounds with Apollo Creed, he doesn’t boast that his resilience is due to all the exercise he got breaking deadbeats’ thumbs. In contrast, the breakout songs by this new film’s protagonist, “Whoop That Trick” and “You Know It’s Hard Out There for a Pimp,” glamorize whoremongering with the conventional hip-hop blend of chest-pounding machismo and self-pity.

Nor is it courageously subversive to make a pimp the star. The mack daddy as folk hero has deep roots in African-American culture. Indeed, the Big Man who lives off the toil of his wives is the envy of Africa. There, indigenous feminists agitate not that women should have the right to work (since they already contribute 80 percent of the

labor, according to one African feminist organization), but that their men should have the duty to work, too.

In America, the man who pockets the income of women was both disreputable and rare until the 1960s, when higher welfare allowed single mothers to support boyfriends. Liberated from the need to hold a steady job to keep a woman, numerous men could finally afford the excitements of a life of crime.

Hip-hop’s celebration of pimping runs all the way from “Rapper’s Delight” to “P.I.M.P.” by the currently reigning rap king 50 Cent, who has been shot nine times. And the pimp-as-icon is now more popular than ever on MTV, as in its hit car-customization show “Pimp My Ride.”

Terrence Howard, who played the black television director intimidated by Matt Dillon’s white cop in “Crash,” is an impressive actor, but he’s so soft-looking than any real pimp wouldn’t hesitate to steal his prostitutes. Howard, who has a degree in chemical engineering, is reminiscent of the bourgeois black youth in Tom Wolfe’s *Man in Full*, who dresses like a thug but lacks “those hard muscles and thong-like tendons and that wary look through the eyes of the ghetto boy.”

In contrast, Howard’s eyes moisten up constantly in “Hustle & Flow.” Certainly, Howard’s sodden acting fits this sentimentalized movie, making him a good bet for an Oscar nomination. Yet the comic happy ending, in which the imprisoned panderer’s record goes straight to the top and hopeful jail guards slip him their demo tapes, suggests that “Hustle & Flow” could have instead been a truly subversive satire on America’s infatuation with pimps. ■

BOOKS

[*Dreaming to Some Purpose: An Autobiography*, Colin Wilson, Arrow, 398 pages]

Inviting the Outsider In

By Justin Raimondo

BOOK REVIEWERS are literary guides, gently leading readers in the right direction, and with the publication of Colin Wilson's autobiography, I am happy to assist in the rediscovery of a hidden treasure. Wilson's meteoric career—from the heights of his 1956 success, *The Outsider*, a study of the creative misfit in modern literature, to his current state of exile from the "literary" community—is a testament to the theme that energizes all 120 of his published books, the idea that human beings can rise above the muck and pettiness of ordinary human existence if only they keep their gaze fixed on the stars.

The Outsider was enormously successful when it was published in the U.S., and it is easy to see why. As the industrial powerhouse of the postwar West was revving up its motors, a dark undercurrent of dissatisfaction and anomie was coursing beneath the glossy veneer of a society that was suddenly wealthier but no less ignorant of the purpose of human existence. A vaguely malignant sense of alienation was spreading like an all-pervasive mental fog, and Wilson's book addressed that problem, which up until that point only the Marxists had recognized, even if they had come up with a very different solution.

The Outsider deals with the creative, albeit frustrated, individual who, even if he finds some outlet for his visionary insights, is haunted by a sense of meaninglessness and unreality. Wilson takes his readers on a grand literary tour covering the romantics, the existentialists,

Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, Hermann Hesse (Wilson was the first to rediscover him), Nijinsky, Van Gogh, and T.E. Lawrence, examining the Outsider as a literary theme and a psychological type, utilizing his apparently encyclopedic knowledge of modern literature to make connections no one had made before.

The archetypal Outsider is the man who not only doesn't fit into the workaday world of jobs, family, and bourgeois life but also knows that he doesn't belong in some fundamental way. This conviction is at the core of most artists and nearly all criminals: for the former it is an impetus to creation, while the latter see it as an invitation to self-indulgence. These two poles of human possibility present the problem of the Outsider as developed by Wilson in his best-selling book—and in all his subsequent works.

And this issue, as the sales figures indicated, was increasingly seen as the problem facing human beings at the beginning of the postwar period. It was, after all, the era of the Organization Man—William Whyte's famous book of that title was published in 1956—the man in the gray flannel suit who moves through a world devoid of values and belongs, body and soul, to the group, the corporation, the nation. In politics, too, the intellectual ancestors of today's neo-conservatives were declaring "the End of Ideology," and the welfare-warfare state reigned supreme. Conformity, both social and political, was the order of the day. Premonitions of a subversive individualism were in the air, however, and *The Outsider* was one of them—in retrospect, one of the most important.

Born in Leicester, England, in 1931, the eldest son of a working class family, Wilson was an intellectually precocious but somewhat alienated lad. The young autodidact devoured books, but college was not an option for Wilson, whose family needed him to provide some income, and at 16 he went to work. Tied down to a series of meaningless jobs, he was faced with the problem that was to plague him for years: how to maintain his innate sense of optimism. The romantic poets and novelists in whom he had

found refuge as a youth had all experienced moments of near-mystical life-affirmation—and were defeated, in the end, by pessimism and failure. Most of them died either by their own hands or from tuberculosis. How to avoid this sort of dead end was to be his life's work.

Wilson wandered through the Bohemian underground of London, working on his ideas and struggling to find some sense of meaning while having to put up with a series of noxious jobs and even more noxious landlords. At one point he decided to save on rent by pitching a tent on Hampstead Heath and writing *The Outsider* in the British Museum by day. *The Outsider* catapulted to the top of the bestseller lists, and Colin Wilson became a household name for a few heady months. As one critic put it, "Not since Lord Byron woke up one morning and found himself famous has an English writer met with such spontaneous and universal acclaim."

In *Dreaming to Some Purpose*, Wilson describes the tumultuous months of his literary fame and the way the critics—the same ones who had hailed him as a genius—turned on him with a vengeance. Wilson had become associated with the "Angry Young Men," a journalistic catchphrase for a loosely associated group of British writers and playwrights including Kingsley Amis, Alan Sillitoe, and John Osborne, whose play "Look Back in Anger" is a classic of the genre. The anti-Wilson backlash was due, in part, to exasperation: what, after all, were these young men so angry about? Arthur Koestler gave voice to the verdict of the literary mandarins when he wrote in *Time* that *The Outsider* was the "bubble of the year, in which a young man discovers that men of genius suffer from *Weltschmerz*."

Another reason for the reaction was political: in what seemed a signal that sent the negative re-evaluation in motion, the leftist critic Dwight MacDonal described Wilson as "a Philistine, a Babbitt, a backwoods revivalist of blood-chilling consistency." Wilson was said to represent the "right wing" of the Angry Young Men, as distinguished from leftists

like Osborne, Kenneth Tynan, and Lindsay Anderson. Denounced as a “fascist,” Wilson was baffled. As he put it in one of his subsequent books, *The Age of Defeat*, “What did they mean by labelling us ‘rightists’? The term is almost meaningless, considering that none of us was conservative, let alone fascist. We were simply not deeply interested in politics, either of the right or left.”

That was precisely the problem, as far as leftist critics were concerned: Wilson was completely turned inward and had no “social consciousness.” He thought he could solve the problem of alienation by achieving a new kind of mental discipline—a method that made revolutionary movements quite irrelevant. The leftist critics knew instinctively that Wilson was not of their kind. In a 1989 essay, “The Decline and Fall of Leftism,” Wilson replicated the insight of Ludwig von Mises in *The Anti-Capitalistic Mentality*, diagnosing socialism as “not a logical response to the perception of social injustice, but a personal sense of injury masquerading as social criticism.”

THE STATURE OF MAN PROTESTS THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE HERO IN MODERN LITERATURE AND THE WAY “EVERYTHING HAS BEEN CUT DOWN TO SIZE.”

Repulsed by the vertiginous experience of fame, Wilson retreated to a cottage in Cornwall and proceeded to write a series of remarkable books—*Religion and the Rebel* (1957), *The Stature of Man* (1957), *The Strength to Dream* (1961), *The New Existentialism* (1966)—all of which got the cold shoulder from critics, who had already decided that he was irrelevant. Philip Toynbee, who had praised *The Outsider* as “luminously intelligent... truly astounding... remarkable...” wrote two years later, “It was clumsily written and still more clumsily composed... his second book is a deplorable piece of work.”

Wilson, by this time inured to the viciousness of British intellectuals, no longer cared; he was too busy constructing a philosophical alternative to the “futility premise” of modern philosophy

and the “insignificance premise” of modern literature. *Religion and the Rebel* argues that the Outsider need not be an exile from society but can be a catalyst for change and a counterpoint to the mechanical materialism of the determinists and the Marxists. “The Outsider,” Wilson wrote, “is doubly a rebel: a rebel against the Established Church, a rebel against the unestablished church of materialism. Yet for all this, he is the real spiritual heir of the prophets, of Jesus and St. Peter, of St. Augustine and Peter Waldo.” The Outsider as a spiritual seeker did not go over big with the critics, either. Religion? they scoffed. See, we always knew Wilson was a reactionary!

The Stature of Man protests the disappearance of the hero in modern literature and, as Wilson put it, the way “everything has been cut down to size. What I wanted to know was: why was it only possible to have heroes in comic books, like Superman or Batman, or in popular thrillers like the James Bond novels? Why is it impossible for a serious writer to write a novel in which the

hero ends by winning?” *The Strength to Dream* is a study of the imagination in literature, in which Wilson set himself up against the prevalent pessimism of the age. In discussing the literary experimentation of Joyce and Ezra Pound, he wrote, “When they looked back on the nineteenth century, they saw a series of gigantic structures that had all been abandoned or subsequently discredited. ... Instead of humanism and optimism, the new basis was authoritarianism and tragedy. As a practicing writer, I am personally concerned to discover how literature can become again purposeful and exuberant.”

In *Dreaming to Some Purpose*, Wilson’s struggle against the modern zeitgeist of exhaustion and defeat—studded with anecdotes about T.S. Eliot, Aldous Huxley, Angus Wilson, W.H. Auden,

Christopher Isherwood, Robert Graves, and Norman Mailer, to name a few—makes for a fascinating read. He reveals himself as a tremendously disciplined writer, whose output I’ve long since given up trying to keep track of. At last count, he had written about 120 books, across a wide variety of forms, including nonfiction studies, novels, and biography, on subjects ranging from philosophy to psychology to music to crime. Wilson began his classic study *The Occult* as a literary chore done solely for the money, but soon realized its congruence with his conviction that our thought processes, like our lives, are largely driven by a deadening automatism and that human beings use only a small portion of their innate mental abilities.

The publication of *Dreaming to Some Purpose* gives us some long overdue perspective on a writer who went into and out of fashion very quickly—too quickly to make any real evaluation of his lasting importance. The general reception of the book, however, has been disappointing. An interviewer for the *Guardian* mocked Wilson by stating at the outset, “This is the first time I have interviewed a self-declared genius.” It was downhill from there. The old animus remains: the critics still don’t get it. Or perhaps the hostility, at least in his own country, is dominant precisely because they do get it.

In the culture wars of the last half-century, Wilson took the side of vitality and optimism against the neurasthenia and neurosis of human beings at “the end of history.” For that, he paid a price. The critics rejected Wilson because they clung to their pessimistic premises like drowning men grabbing on to the detritus of a sunken ship. In his rebellion against these trends, Wilson was ahead of his time. If ever a writer deserved to be re-evaluated and given his due as an original thinker, it is Colin Wilson, the quintessential outsider. ■

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[*Hot Property: The Stealing of Ideas in an Age of Globalization*, Pat Choate, Knopf, 368 pages]

Counterfeiting the American Dream

By James Gass

FEW COULD HAVE envisioned an American economic empire when in 1790 Samuel Hopkins of Pittsford, Vermont was granted the first U.S. patent for developing potash, an ingredient in the production of glass and soap. But Pat Choate's provocative new book, *Hot Property*, illustrates how the sanctity of ideas and scientific innovations has been one of the wellsprings of our national greatness. Choate also reveals hard truths about how tough foreign competition, our elites' complacency, and globalism are allowing America's patents, copyrights, trademarks, and intellectual capital to be pilfered.

Early on, Choate returns us to a time when Americans sought independence from the world and we gloried in our national competitiveness, our vigorous pursuit of national interests, and our genius for creativity. *Hot Property's* middle chapters discuss how Germany, Japan, and China used patents—and stole them from others—to remake their economies. Later chapters show how toothless interdiction efforts have left international pirating and counterfeiting virtually unchecked. The subplot: our free-trade policies and globalism facilitate this, “the great economic crime of the twenty-first century.”

The worldwide fleecing of intellectual property accounts for annual losses to the U.S. and Europe of approximately \$250 billion and \$400 billion respectively. This international larceny depends on nations that can actually foster ideas and invent contraptions. The cotton gin, Goodyear rubber, steel

production, the Kitty Hawk Flyer, auto manufacturing, Hollywood, IBM, and biotechnology are just a few examples of America's ingenuity. Throughout *Hot Property's* pages, Choate crafts vignettes about American inventors, authors, and entrepreneurs, men like Eli Whitney, Alexander Graham Bell, and Thomas Edison. These sketches help us, as M.E. Bradford wrote, to remember who we are.

One of the legacies of the Anglo-American world has been the defense of private-property rights. As demonstrated by the Magna Carta, the common law, John Locke, and the 1709 Statute of Anne protecting copyrights, the British were the Western world's pioneers in legally safeguarding assets, ideas, and land. When the conservative revolutionaries who founded our Republic broke with king and parliament, they fought to preserve enduring legal traditions that the British Empire itself no longer fully upheld. In Philadelphia, when Madison proposed embedding the authors and inventors clause for securing copyrights and patents into the Constitution, the delegates consented unanimously and without debate.

Choate tells us that in 1790, the Framers—and specifically the first secretary of state, Thomas Jefferson—established the U.S. Patent Office so that American citizen-inventors could profit from and secure exclusive rights to their ideas. The Patent Act of 1793 granted U.S. patent protection only to American citizens. Clearly, the Framers were committed to encouraging and guarding U.S. inventors and scientific innovations in support of our national wealth and security; civic duty came before democratizing science.

Though the U.S. comprises only 5 percent of the world's population, Choate states that Americans, “create a majority of its innovations.” IBM, for example, holds the greatest number of patents worldwide, some 40,000. Programmed into our liberty, America's creativity is truly astounding, especially considering that until recently the number of Americans with college degrees has always

been quite small. Yet *Hot Property* points out that Americans have long been among the most literate people on earth, mostly due to Bible reading and newspapers. Famously, Thomas Edison, who still holds the record for the highest number of individual patents, with 1,093 in the U.S. and 1,200 in 34 foreign countries, was deaf and had no higher education. From the beginning, American inventors and innovations have been the envy of the world.

In 1786, John Adams observed, “The moment the idea is admitted into society that property is not as sacred as the law of God ... anarchy and tyranny commence.” *Hot Property's* chapters on our rivals' ways with patents and globalism's ineffectiveness in preserving intellectual property are alarmingly instructive. We also learn about the ways in which the so-called “global community” manipulates and exploits America's legal system, which puts the onus on individual patent holders to defend their rights.

Choate describes how the “German Method” of using patents as tariffs to protect that country's technology-based and government-subsidized industries has existed since Bismark. Germany has used a network of patents, banks, corporations, cartels, engineers, and scientists to dominate the world's chemical industry for 150 years. The Germans' long-standing patent strategy involves withholding licenses from U.S. companies, refusing to share their technology, erecting barriers to industrial espionage, using only German workers in sensitive positions, hiring American lawyers to seal their patents in the U.S., and filing thousands of misdirecting, incomplete, and often bogus patents to throw off their competitors. In the past, these phony German chemical patents have proven lethal to would-be foreign copycats.

IG Farben, Germany's pre-World War II chemical cartel, despite defeat in the war, the break-up of its companies, and the Allied seizure of tens of thousands of patents, gradually evolved into Germany's “Big Three” chemical corporations. In

2003, one of the major companies derived from IG Farben, BASF, was the world's leading chemical corporation, far outpacing America's Dow and DuPont. It is no surprise that both Japan and China have replicated this successful "German Method."

In 1990, Choate's *Agents of Influence* alerted Americans about the Japanese lobbying our government and buying up our treasury bonds. Fifteen years later, we are shocked that 75 percent of America's debt is owned by Asian, and predominantly Japanese, banks. In *Hot Property*, Choate revisits how Japan's postwar economic rise piggybacked on America's military and diplomatic objectives. While America was containing the Soviets, North Korea, and China, Japan used our strategic needs in Asia to gain special access to our domestic markets and precious technologies. Cold War presidents actually forced U.S. companies to share patents with the Japanese without charging royalties. Meanwhile, Japan was sheltered by our military and by its own tariffs.

"Japan's Way" with patents has been informed by a nationalism that views power as derived from "economic rather than military conquest." Japan executes "one of the world's largest industrial espionage operations," led by the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) and the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry (METI). Japan's economic objective is clear: to use its bureaucrats, scientists, and graduate students to steal from and undermine foreign companies and look after Japanese interests. Japan also employs "patent flooding," "patent mining," and "stripping foreign patents from owners." This includes filing hundreds of trivial patents on all the component parts of the patented product, amounting to a patent end-run. At the same time, Japanese companies pinch our technology through the compromises we make, such as "royalty-free cross-licensing agreements" and "strategic alliances." Tokyo terms this economic strategy the *kyosei* movement. This translates plainly into English as "dependence."

"China Rising" is the subject of much discussion, and well it should be because China's ascent is the great economic event of the 21st century. In *Hot Property*, we see the Chinese ransacking our patents, copyrights, and trademarks. China, Choate writes, is "a counterfeiter's paradise" and "is using all the usual means" to acquire our technology, including "licensing, theft, piracy, intimidation, spies, and cooperation." Through joint ventures with Chinese businesses, Microsoft, IBM, Boeing, GE, Motorola, and other American companies have been "shifting ... work, jobs, research, and development to China." In these free-trade deals, we allow our technology, our security, and our future to be given away for cheap labor, short-run profits, and diplomatic niceties. With 3,000 Chinese companies operating inside the U.S., the Chinese have stolen not just our CDs and DVDs but the designs for our modern nuclear warheads and our missile guidance systems.

Since 1980, Communist China's historic growth has capitalized on Amer-

ica's commitment to globalism. Our consumption, debts, trade deficits, and China's \$50 billion annual counterfeit industry are facilitated by the "laxity, naïveté, and greed" of America's political, business, and academic elites. Between 1985 and 2000, of the "68,500 doctoral degrees in science and engineering from U.S. universities ... 26,500 of those degrees went to students from China." While profiteering from our national decline, the nation's elites silence any debate about how America's faith in "a world without borders" is helping the Chinese rip us off.

In so many ways, the culture of free trade has eroded the laws and government policies that would allow Americans to defend themselves from international piracy. The cutpursing of U.S. patents and products is of little interest to the globocrats of the WTO, which like the UN has overtly anti-American biases. For our part, between 2000 and 2004, "the U.S. filed no intellectual property cases with the WTO." Only a few lawyers at the Justice Department are assigned to apprehend the intellectual robbers of America. Wasn't it the "knowledge work" that was going to be preserved when free-trade policies took America's manufacturing jobs overseas? Evidently, our political class has been far too busy listening to that tired old tune, "We Are the World," to preserve the foundations of their own country.

In September 1787, a certain Mrs. Powel patiently awaited the outcome of the Constitutional Convention. As Benjamin Franklin, America's greatest inventor-statesman, departed Independence Hall, she asked him, "Well, doctor, what have we got?" Famously, Franklin responded, "A republic, if you can keep it." *Hot Property* offers us an appreciation of our nation's politically brilliant and scientifically dynamic past. It also reminds us about the urgent need to safeguard our inventions, lest our Republic's principles themselves be counterfeited or stolen outright. ■

James Gass writes from the Boston area.

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[*The Vast Left Wing Conspiracy*,
Byron York, Crown Forum, 277
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Conspiracy Theory

by Peter J. Lynch

IN JANUARY 1998, as wild rumors about White House interns, a blue dress, and impeachment flew across Washington and cyberspace, first lady Hillary Clinton appeared on NBC's "Today" show and matter-of-factly dismissed all the fuss as the product of "a vast right-wing conspiracy" targeting her husband. Perhaps forgetting that President Clinton's eventual impeachment amounted to a rather Pyrrhic victory for the Right, the Left decided to try its hand at removing a sitting president. Not long after the disputed election of George W. Bush in 2000, it began to assemble a grand coalition in the hope of unseating him in 2004.

For almost two years, *National Review* White House correspondent Byron York tracked a network of grassroots Internet activists, liberal filmmakers, big-money Hollywood donors, and Clintonite think-tankers who worked more or less in concert to elect anyone whose name wasn't Bush. Using everything from talk radio, web-based virtual meetings, and blockbuster documentary films to old-fashioned get-out-the-vote operations, this effort cost tens of millions of dollars, involved hundreds of thousands of people, and ultimately came to naught. York calls the movement—and the book that resulted from those two years—*The Vast Left Wing Conspiracy*, and he insists that despite its failure to defeat Bush in the last election, this network has nevertheless engineered a revolution in American politics and "seems poised to exert even more influence in coming campaigns."

York traces the genesis of the conspiracy back to the Clinton impeachment. A small clique of Democratic activists, led

by a California couple who became multimillionaires thanks to a screensaver featuring winged toasters, created a website called MoveOn.org. With its modestly vindictive goal of defeating members of Congress who supported the impeachment, MoveOn represented one of the first successful uses of the Internet as a means to achieve a political end. The Bush administration, right from its controversial beginning in the 2000 election, was squarely in the group's crosshairs. As the chance to defeat the Red (State) Menace drew near in 2003, MoveOn and its cadre of outsiders joined forces with veteran strategists from a variety of progressive outfits and deep-pocketed benefactors of left-wing causes.

The outsider status of the initial conspirators is key and rightfully highlighted by York. Its constant attempts to stir up resentment toward the rich notwithstanding, the Democratic Party's secret shame for years has been that it depends on a relative handful of very wealthy donors to provide the bulk of its funding to a much greater extent than the Republican Party does. The McCain-Feingold campaign-finance regime, which capped contributions to candidates and parties per election cycle at \$2,000 and \$25,000 respectively, thus disproportionately harmed the Democrats.

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But since American politicians are congenitally incapable of writing tax law free of loopholes, a host of new organizations called "527" groups (after the section of the tax code that permits them), sprang up almost overnight to keep money in politics. Donors to these outfits could contribute as much as they wanted, the only catch being that by law the 527s could neither co-ordinate with a campaign or party nor endorse candidates.

And contribute they did. Gripped by their monomania to defeat Bush, the

Left's money persons lavished their lucre on a glut of new 527 organizations with names like the Media Fund, America Votes, and most prominently, America Coming Together, or ACT. While ACT raised millions of dollars and enlisted thousands of highly motivated volunteers to drum up opposition to Bush and mobilize voters in swing states, particularly Ohio, other opportunities presented themselves to the well-heeled radical. Former Clinton crony John Podesta founded a new think tank, the Center for American Progress, to produce an *ex post facto* ideology for the vast left-wing conspiracy. A few idealistic venture capitalists financed Air America, an upstart talk radio station exclusively broadcasting voices from the left side of the spectrum to counterbalance Limbaugh, Hannity, and company. The rhetoric emanating from these mouthpieces tended to wax extremist, another indication of the diminished importance of the national party apparatus. Modern electioneering can be nasty, but it is doubtful that the professionals at the Democratic National Committee would have allowed the rancorous attacks on the president, such as the numerous online commercials equating Bush with Hitler, produced in 2004 by those operating without any concern for Beltway establishment niceties.

The main financial supporter of the anti-Bush coalition was the Hungarian-born financier George Soros, known prior to September 11 primarily as the head of the Open Society Institute, a foundation that provides grants to help former Eastern Bloc countries transition from godless communism to godless capitalism. The War on Terror that followed 9/11 convinced him to meddle in the affairs of his naturalized homeland for a change and inspired him to do everything in his power to defeat George W. Bush. By the end of the 2004

campaign, Soros had spent over \$25 million toward that end, much of it going to America Coming Together, and in the process he became by far the biggest single donor in American electoral history. Not bad for someone who previously gave millions to the “clean campaign” cause.

The Vast Left Wing Conspiracy offers its readers at best a passable version of the tumultuous 2004 campaign. Anyone looking for something earth-shattering will be disappointed. Only a total innocent could be shocked that America Coming Together and MoveOn.org worked closely with the Kerry campaign in violation of not only the letter of McCain-Feingold but certainly its spirit as well. Or that shy, retiring, scrupulous fact-checker Michael Moore overstated the size of his film’s audience in some parts of the country and that talk-radio hosts occasionally say outrageous things while in high dudgeon. Moreover, unable or unwilling to acknowledge the faults of the president, York cannot see that George W. Bush himself bears a large share of the blame for the degree to which the movement to unseat him metastasized.

Instead, York simply assumes that there are hordes of America-hating radicals out there. He documents how the MoveOn crowd that formed the embry-

onic core of the conspiracy opposed American military action against the Taliban in 2001, a position that was, as York notes, at odds with the “national consensus.” But how did a group so far outside the mainstream come to enlist 2.5 million passionate people to its banner and raise millions of dollars? York won’t admit it, but MoveOn met with such success for the same reason Michael Moore’s “Fahrenheit 9/11” became the top-grossing documentary film of all time. The same reason 59 million Americans voted for a junior senator from Massachusetts whose main qualifications for the presidency were an abbreviated stint killing Charlie, marrying heiresses, and tricking the voters of Massachusetts into thinking he’s Irish—the invasion of Iraq.

York understandably prefers to focus on the Left’s desire to control government. To his mind, the explanation for the unprecedented left-wing political phenomenon that emerged during Bush’s first term is elementary. “Liberals had never organized on a grand scale in the past ... because they had never really needed to,” he observes. Faced with Republican (and ostensibly conservative) control of both the executive branch and Congress for the first time in decades, liberals panicked and took steps to initiate the vast left-wing con-

spiracy. Much to the chagrin of conservatives, the Left’s worst fears have not come to pass, but York is definitely on to something here. Should Bush nominate a genuinely conservative Supreme Court justice, the spectacle that ensues will likely make the Bork and Thomas hearings look dignified in comparison. But unfortunately for York’s analysis, his fealty to the administration prevents him from reaching the fairly obvious conclusion that regardless of the Left’s will to power, it was the Iraq War that sparked mass demonstrations on a scale the country had not seen since Vietnam. Absent George W. Bush and the neo-cons’ irrational foreign-policy exuberance, the vaunted vast left-wing conspiracy would not have achieved anywhere near the vastness it did.

However the conspiracy came about, it could well prove a fixture on the political scene for a long time to come. York draws a parallel between the present-day Left and the Right in the aftermath of Barry Goldwater’s defeat in 1964, suggesting that the vast left-wing conspiracy might form the foundation of a future Democratic majority. Of course, as he points out, today’s Democrats do not face nearly as uphill a battle as Republicans did 40 years ago: “In 1964, Republican Barry Goldwater was routed by Democrat Lyndon Johnson, losing by more than 22 percentage points, whereas in 2004, John Kerry lost to Bush by a mere 3 points.”

The Left doesn’t need a valid reason to be hate-filled and shrill. But give it one in the form of a misguided, poorly planned war, and it can rapidly become apoplectic. Despite having lived through the ‘60s, Bush seems to have forgotten that. As a result, the Bush legacy to the American Right may be millions of angry, well-organized, highly motivated leftists eager to thwart the conservative agenda and—maybe more terrifying still—elect the woman who introduced us to the concept of vast conspiracies of any stripe seven years ago. ■

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The Other Cruellest Month



August is dubbed the “silly season” because nothing is said to happen. Presidents as well as proletarians loll about on farms and beaches, while

polymaths leave their academic cloisters for places like Cape Cod or even the Hamptons. Offices are half empty, the parks are full of picnickers, and all anyone seems to talk about is the heat. Congress and the Supreme Court are shut, as are their equivalents in Europe. The French are to a man on paid holidays, and the only people to be found in Rome and in Athens are Japanese tourists and the odd American student.

What bliss, *n'est-ce pas*? Especially in Paris, where even the Russian hookers have left for St. Tropez, Cap d'Antibes, and Monte Carlo, and all the tourist traps are shut tight until *le grand retour* in September. Yes, there is a dire absence of events during the month of August, but if we look at history—and I strongly suggest that the neocons who have so brilliantly got us in the mess we're in today do—some of mankind's most violent events began this month. (Incidentally, it was the Roman Senate that decreed that the eighth month of the year should be named after the great Emperor Augustus, the nephew of Julius Caesar.)

In the last century, the world's two most gruesome conflicts began in August: World War I broke out on the fourth of the month in 1914, while in 1939 Nazi Germany invaded Poland on the last day of the last hour of the month. Two of the greatest books written about the First World War bear the name of August in their titles: Barbara Tuchman's *Guns of August* and Alexander Sozhenitsyn's *August 1914*.

Why August? Well, theories abound, but the fact that the sun-baked earth and

hardened ground make it the best time for cavalry, infantry, and armor to advance surely has something to do with it. And there's also the human factor: the fact that the decision makers are off on their hols, leaving less competent people behind (this does not apply to the present crowd in Washington), makes would-be invaders sit up and take notice.

World War I is the perfect example of this last theory. During that doom-laden summer of 1914, everyone in positions of power was fully aware that Europe was astride a powder keg. Yet Kaiser Wilhelm II went cruising on his imperial yacht in the North Sea (no faxes or telephones back then) while Britain's foreign secretary, Edward Grey, disappeared to go

and Paris, the truth is that the initial decisions to go to war were taken by underlings in their absence.

Those in power were more in control when World War II broke out, but they were definitely not behind their desks. After the “Glorious Twelfth” everyone in Britain was at their country estates blasting away, whereas the French were by now following Leon Blum's decree that every French citizen had to lay down his tools and take a vacation. Including the military.

But let's not blame everything on idleness and those who practice inertia during the month of August. That old devil sun has a lot to do with it. When the sun is in Leo—my star sign—we feel friskier, lustier, and more mischievous. Leos like to love, but they also like to fight.

Not, however, poor William Wallace. It was in August of the year 1305 when he was hanged, drawn, beheaded, and

THE **SUN-BAKED EARTH** AND HARDENED GROUND MAKE IT **THE BEST TIME** FOR CAVALRY, INFANTRY, AND ARMOR TO **ADVANCE**.

fishing in places unknown. The Kaiser's army chief of staff, Prince Helmuth von Moltke, was taking the waters in Carlsbad, while Germany's naval supremo, Admiral Tirpitz, had chosen Switzerland as the place to calm his nerves. Germany's foreign secretary, Gottlieb von Jagow, picked August as the date to get married and took his honeymoon in Lucerne. King George, needless to say, was at Balmoral, getting ready to shoot anything that flew, while the French government had retired to their various chateaux. Although war may have broken out even if these people had been behind their desks in Berlin, London,

quartered in London, before what remained of him was sent up north to Scotland as a warning to the Scots to be nice. His death was the catalyst that nine years later led to Scotland's independence from the hated English.

And let's not forget August 6, 1945. Hiroshima. Need I say more? And Nagasaki three days later. By then we had come full circle. The civilized were vaporizing the so-called uncivilized, while opening a Pandora's box that might still come back to haunt us, our children, and grandchildren one fine day. August is not the silly month we make it out to be. ■

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